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Ladymatic



EDITOR'S LETTER





Stepping on to the set of our cover shoot to interview Nigella Lawson felt a bit like stepping through the wardrobe into Narnia. Picture the scene: raindrenched skies over a location house in west London, a giant snow machine and all the Elves And The Shoemaker brilliance of photographer Max Abadian and his team at work. Just magical... As she tells us on page 102, this

is Nigella's new start and it was fabulous to see her looking so relaxed and happy in her skin. She is, of course, the ultimate Christmas muse and I hope you enjoy both catching up with her thoughts on the season and cooking the recipes from her fabulous feast for friends (page 220).

As I type it is the morning after our Red Women of the Year Awards, in association with Clinique. With every keystroke I have the extraordinary words and heartstirring stories of our winners ringing in my head, making me feel immensely humble and reminding me that we do have the power to change the world and address inequalities, one woman at a time.

Of course, at this time of year, the poignant ghosts of Christmas past are in the air and a sense of loss is, for so many of us, just below the surface. On page 137, Jean Gross shares her thoughts a year after the loss of her exceptional and inspiring daughter, Kate. It will move you to tears.

We've met some incredible women in 2015 at Red and had the opportunity to debate feminism – its future, present and past. This month, Natasha Lunn meets Gloria Steinem (page 149), who in many ways personifies all three - as potent a campaigner at 81 as she was in the 1960s.

My own family's festive celebration is a multi-culti/ mixed-faith mash-up with a big emphasis on eating. We're all excited to get stuck into Ottolenghi's big-day recipes (page 228). Elsewhere in the issue, we've got the other deeply pleasurable activities of the season – gifting and dressing-up – covered in our Gift edit (page 79) and party special (page 45), with brilliant finds at every price point. Finally, see page 246 for how to use your Starbucks gift card (on the cover) to get a complimentary pick-me-up when you're pounding those pavements. It's our early festive treat to you.

Editor-in-chief SARAHBAILEY

THIS MONTH I HAVE BEEN:

DAZZLED by the Fondazione Prada in Milan; **WEARING** my new MiH Breathless jeans with everything; **LOUNGING** in the deep-orange booths at new restaurant 45 Jermyn St; SHOPPING the amazing Gucci edit at Matchesfashion.com (Santa, please note); TWEETING @SarahRedMag

Give a year's worth of *Red* to a friend this Christmas page 247





CHANEL







EMPORIO ARMANI



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THIS MONTH'S COVER Nigella Lawson wears: Dress, £1,195, Merchant Archive. Ring, £3,590, Diane Kordas at Matchesfashion.com. Creative direction Nicola Rose. Photographed by Max Abadian. Hair Bjørn Krischker at Frank Agency, using Kevin Murphy. Make-up Lee Pycroft at My-Management, using Bobbi Brown. Additional styling Cheryl Konteh. Set design Laura Timmons. Recreate Nigella's look using Intensive Skin Serum Foundation SPF 40 in Warm Ivory, Sheer Finish Pressed Powder in Pale

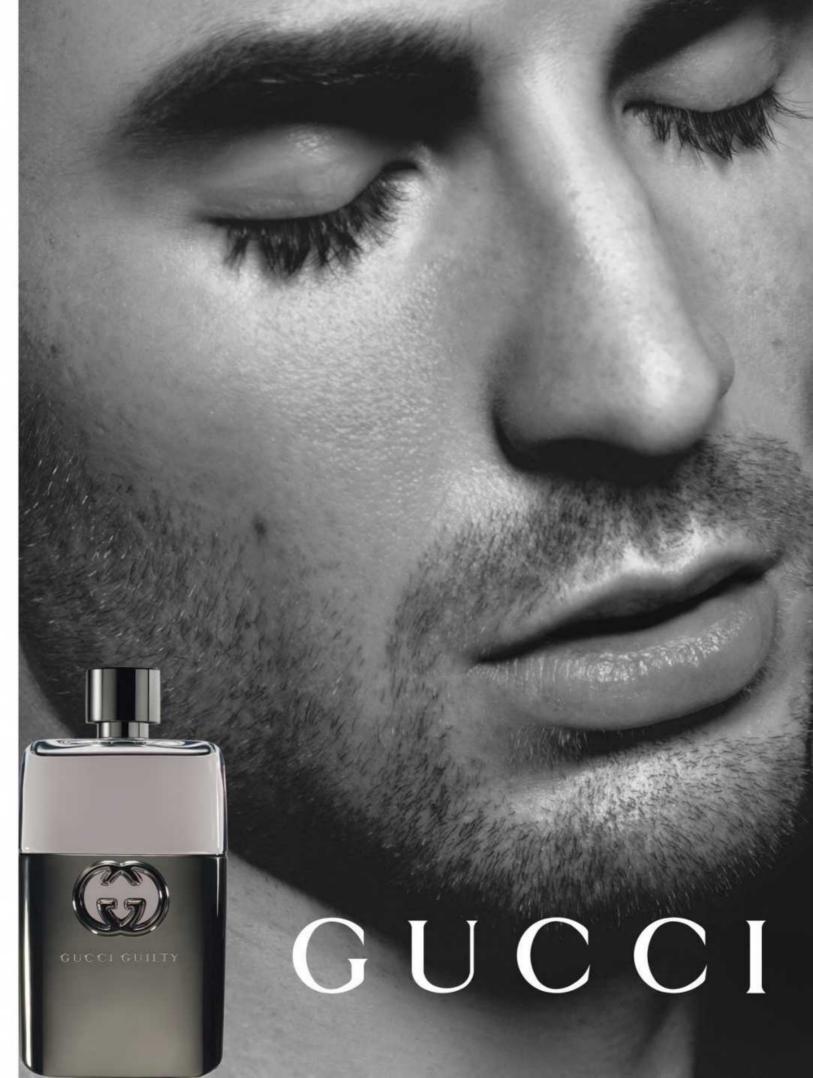
Yellow, Pot Rouge for Lips & Cheeks in Powder Pink, Eye Shadow in Cocoa, Long-Wear Gel Eyeliner in Black Ink, Smokey Eye Mascara and Lip Color in Sandwash Pink, all Bobbi Brown. Subscribe to Red to receive the limited-edition covers; see page 227 for details.

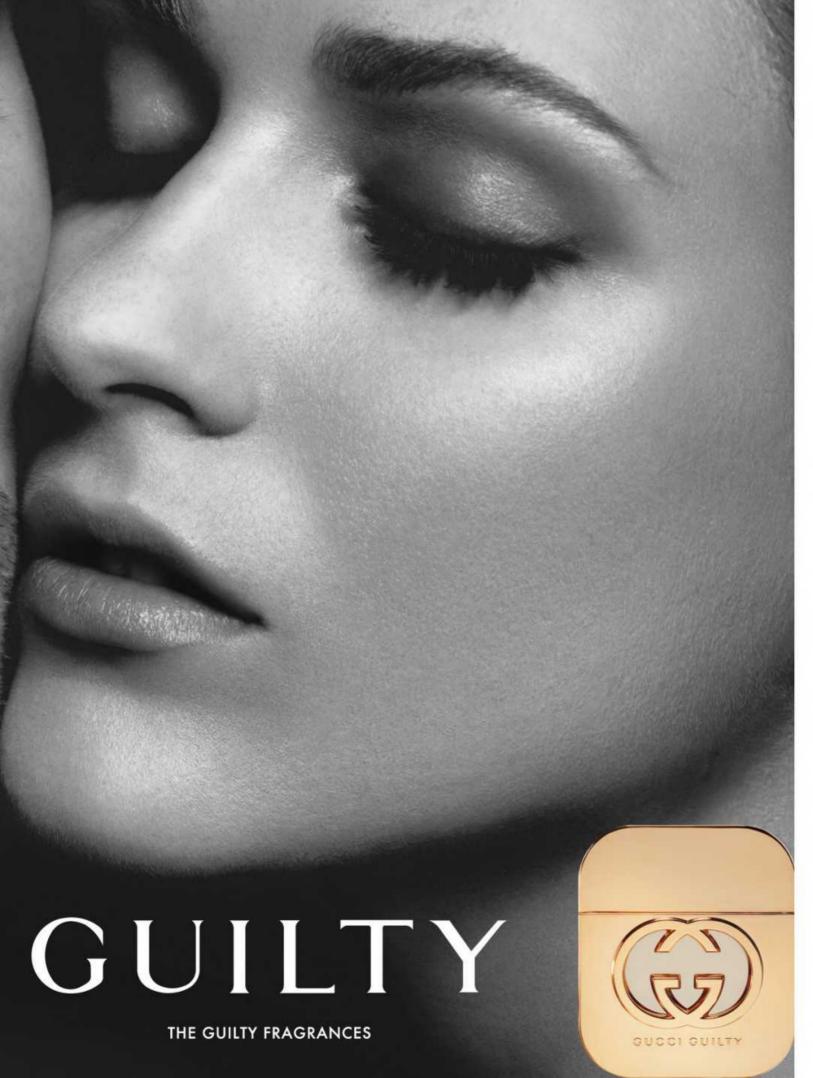




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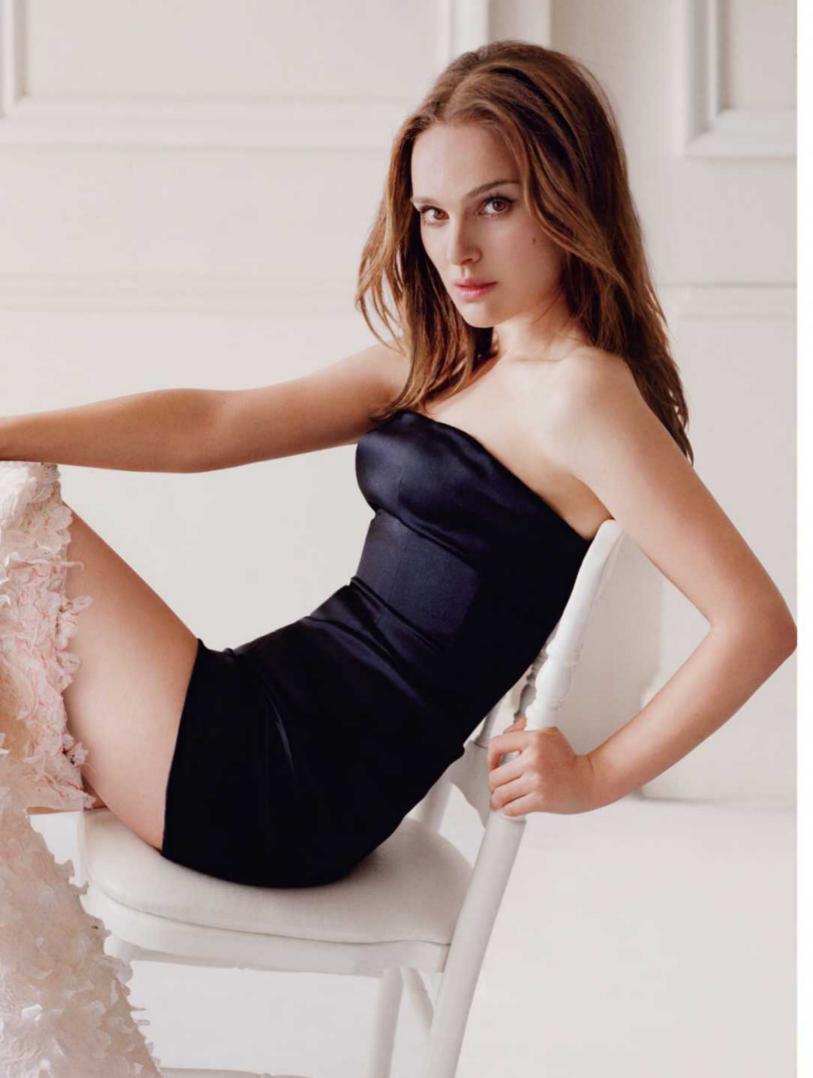




Miss Dior



So Miss, so Dior



CONTRIBUTORS

December 2015

Yotam Ottolenghi

Shares his alternative Christmas lunch recipes on page 228

BEST THINGS IN LIFE?

- Tahini paste Regent's Park ● House Of Cards
- A sharp Japanese knife **MY FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION**

IS... Roasted Brussels sprouts with pomegranate seeds.





Vickie Keeble Styles this season's party make-up on page 182

BEST THINGS IN LIFE?

- My daughter's laughter
- Earl Grey rooibos tea
- Country walks Ice-cold champagne with friends on a hot day

 Listening to the sea while sunbathing **MY FAVOURITE**

CHRISTMAS TRADITION

IS... Putting up a knitted tree decoration that says 'Feliz Navidad'. which we bought in Buenos Aires!



Styles Baby, it's cold outside on page 162

BEST THINGS IN LIFE? Having a drink with

- close friends at sundown
- Skating on the canals in Amsterdam

 Partying with my husband **MY FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS** TRADITION IS...

Seeing the excited faces of my kids when they come down for Christmas breakfast.





Alice Pantony

Finds out how to give tipples a healthy twist on page 265 **BEST THINGS IN LIFE?**

- Diving My girl gang My family's health ● Male
- feminists Watching bad horror films with my boyfriend MY FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION IS...

Board games with my best friend's family on Boxing Day.



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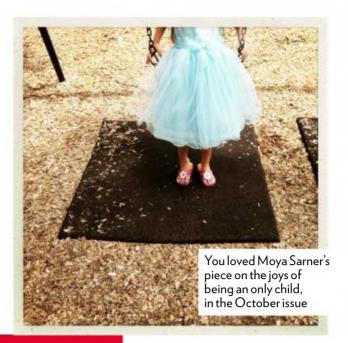
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SAY IT WRITE IT TWEET IT

If you have any news, views or issues you'd like to see covered, we'd love to hear from you



Red love

'Whether you have a family of one, two, three, four or more, what matters is not numbers, but love,' wrote Moya Sarner in *Only, not lonely* (October), and many of you identified with her message. 'Lovely article about being an only child @RedMagDaily @MoyaSarner. Have to bite my tongue when people say, "Oh, I wouldn't have guessed!",' wrote @rebeccawillis on Twitter.

'What an intelligent, refreshing article by Moya Sarner about how it feels to be an only child,' Rosemary Stevens emailed. 'I still mourn that I have not provided siblings for my son, but then I look at him and he is confident, fun, gregarious, sharing, intelligent and mature. He tells me he doesn't feel he has missed out at all, like Moya. Thank you for bringing this subject back to people's minds.'

Similarly, Katherine wrote, 'Thank you for such a lovely article – *Only, not lonely*. An only child myself, I felt as if I was reading my own diary. Having waited eight long years and after several rounds of IVF, I became a mother myself at 30. I feel truly blessed to be a mother

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of one special little boy. I never, ever thought I would be so fortunate as to fall pregnant. I cherish my little boy like nothing I could ever describe, and if I only ever mother one child, I will be thankful for the rest of my life.'

I'M STILL LAUGHING OUT LOUD AT ROSIE GREEN'S COLUMN ON HER MUM'S SENIOR MOMENTS

(October). Not only has my lovely late mum done most of them, but so have I. This includes the time I climbed into my work colleague's car for a lift home, only to realise that I didn't know the driver! I'm just delighted to be using my smartphone for this email, as it is considerably smarter than me! Rosie Green, you make my day. *Mary McMahon, via email*

@LouiseHartrey Great @hubdot feature by @Natashalunn in

Our mail of the month wins Lancôme beauty treats, worth £105 Revitalise your skin with Lancôme's number-one Advanced Génifique, for radiant-looking skin. Next, refresh and illuminate eyes with Lancôme Génifique Yeux Light-Pearl to reduce dark circles and fine lines. This month's prize goes to Katherine, mentioned in *Red love*. October @RedMagDaily. A brilliant initiative to help women help each other.

@BeautyHound @dollyalderton great piece in @RedMagDaily, let's bin to-do lists! Life is what happens while you're making to-do lists!

RED'S AWARDS

MARKS & SPENCER FOOD **PORTRAITURE AWARD** 2015 (Jonathan Gregson) Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year Awards 2015 **JASMINE SOUNDBITE:** MAGAZINES (Annabel Meggeson) Jasmine Awards 2015 BEST MONTHLY **CONSUMER MAGAZINE JOURNALIST &** JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR (Annabel Meggeson) Johnson & Johnson Skincare Journalism Awards 2014 BEST JOURNALISM: BEAUTY OR GROOMING (Annabel Meggeson and Rosie Green) & BEST LAYOUT: BEAUTY OR GROOMING (Annabel Meggeson and Haley Austin) P&G Beauty & Grooming Awards 2013 **BEST DIGITAL FRAGRANCE EXPERIENCE** (Annabel Meggeson) The Jasmine Awards

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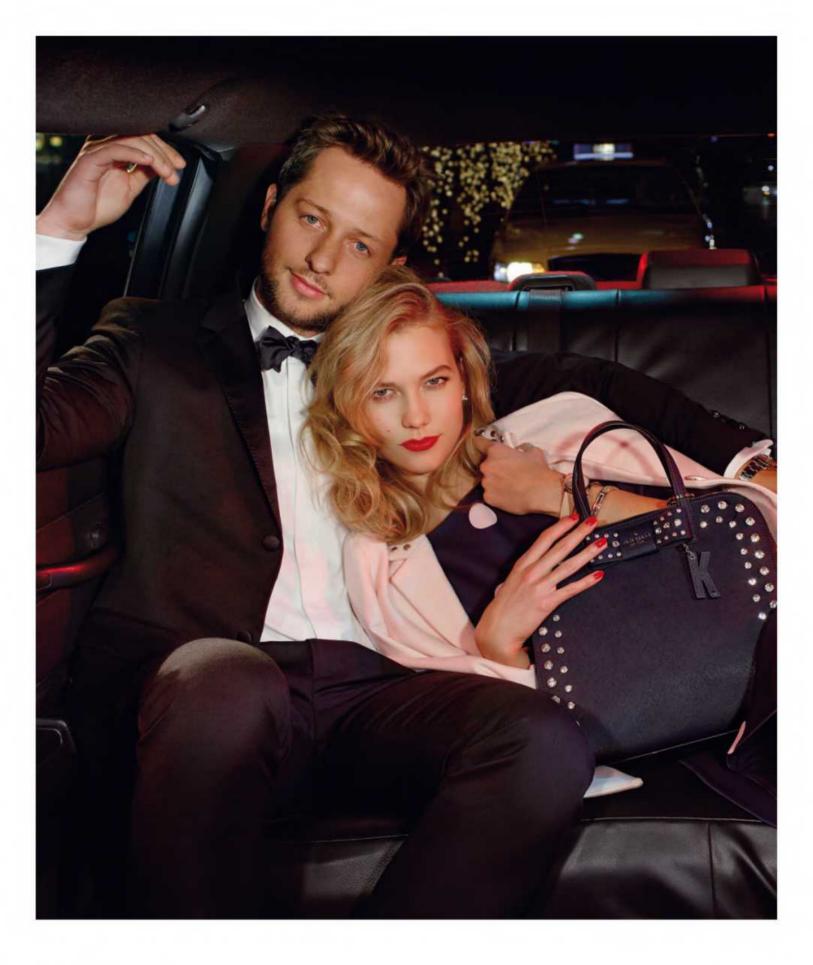
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Glass hair clip, £34,

Metaland crystal necklace, £22.99, Zara FESTIVE STYLE EVERYPARTY FESTIVE STYLE Outlide to festive-season to see the season of the season o

Welcome to your ultimate guide to festive-season style. From low-key to showstopper, your party dress-ups start here

Metal and glass earring, £355 for one, Givenchy at

Farfetch

YOUR BLACK-TIE

Floor-sweeper gowns, flurries of feathers and bejewelled headbands. Formal just got fabulous

Feather jacket, £98, Ánthropologie

Crystal earrings, £98, J Crew

Satin dress £299, Ted Baker

> Crystal collar, £185, Dorothee Schumacher

Style tip

A maxi dress with long sleeves will cover up problem areas and solve the chill factor. Choose a silky, fluid fabric to keep your look luxe and feminine

Satin dress, £110, Asos

Jacquard skirt, £889, Marina Rinaldi

Velvet and leather shoes. £465, Dolce & Gabbana at Net-A-Porter

MAC Lipstick £15.50

THE FOREVER LBD

An LBD is for life, not just for Christmas, so it's worth taking a financial hit. A simple silhouette that beautifully flatters will mean you wear it again and again

Satin taffeta dress, £1,550, Emilia Wickstead at Harvey Nichols

Metal headband. £162, Oscar de la Renta at Matches

fashion.com

New neckline alert Try the one-shoulder

Lace dress, £432.56, Alexis at Shopbop

> Metal bag, £50. Aldo

Velvet £39.99. Zara

Leather shoes, £169, Pretty Ballerinas »



Lace and metal shoes. £89, Dune

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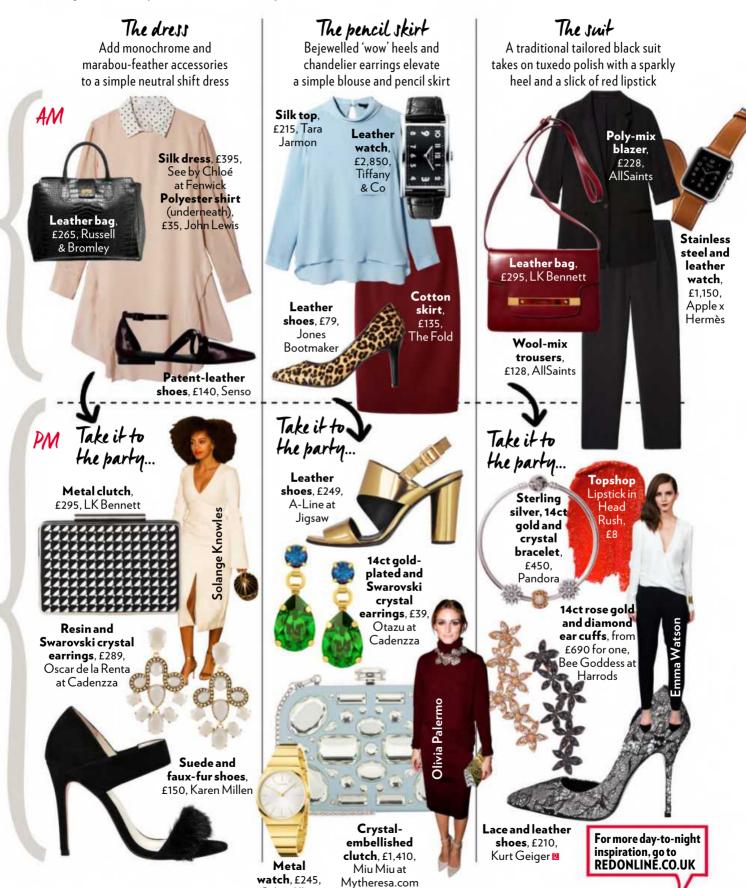






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Leather clutch, £244, DVF

INSIDER STYLE

It's a great time of year for having some fun with your wardrobe. Here, four style influencers let us in on their party-dressing secrets

> Photographs EVA K SALVI Styling ALEXANDRA LUNT

Paula Reed, creative director, Mytheresa.com

I often go straight from work to a party so I have to think about a look in the morning that I can glam up for the evening. Statement jewellery and a great pair of heels are essential and the easiest outfits to dress up are simple LBDs and my trusty mannish tailoring. I do love to experiment with colour for the evening, too, as I don't wear it so much during the day.

I have a shocking pink Roksanda Ilincic dress that's seen me through several party seasons and is still going strong. My new thing is wearing white for night – as I get older, it's much kinder to my skin than black.

The British Fashion Awards at the end of November (held at the London Coliseum this year) always feel like the gateway to party season for me. The fashion bar is set pretty high so I almost always head to Erdem or Edun and add a statement piece of jewellery from Vickisarge. »

Crystal clip-on earrings, £160, Miu Miu at Mytheresa.com

> **Glitter leather shoes**, £440, Saint Laurent at Mytheresa.com





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Charlotte et sa fille Alice

VALENTINO







YOU SHALL go to the ball.

HELL, YES

In the midst of 'dress panic', Red's editor-in-chief Sarah Bailey discovers there is method to finding that elusive hero piece

ress code: two words that unsettle even the most confident of dressers. In this I include myself, which is ironic really, as having a bit of a try-on and a twirl before a night out is my fashion happy place.

My default mode of dress is actually 'a bit sparkly'. But a dress code – not so much. I'm convinced many of us get so confused by the rather opaque protocols of modern dress codes we're apt to ignore them altogether. (When I lived in New York, we'd refer to some dos as 'British black tie', which meant that men might wear no tie and a black shirt, or even really clean trainers. I know! Further subtly nuanced layers of confusion. But I digress.)

'The thing Back in May, a wonderful invitation to an AIDS gala in Vienna landed on my that makes desk, sending me into a spin. The dress you SHINE code: white tie. 'Long, long, long,' said my (Italian) assistant Lucia, adding, 'Until very recently that meant gloves,' in case comfortable I wasn't listening properly. My suggestion that I might pimp one of my floaty summer maxi dresses with a tuxedo was met by Lucia's crushing assessment that 'the fabrics will look cheap under the lights'. There followed what is known in the business as a 'dress panic', which taught me that dress code or no, all of us need some bankers in our wardrobes, just as our menfolk have their suits.

To west London then and the lovely chic environs of the Merchant Archive boutique and designer Sophie Sarah Bailey's dress-code wins, clockwise from left: with David Gandy in the Merchant Archive saviour; in Kalinka New York; conquering black tie in Ralph Lauren; hero-dress designer Sophie Merchant of Merchant Archive

Merchant, a vintage specialist whose work I've followed for years (chiefly on the back of her client Florence Welch). Now she's applying her knowledge of fashion history to her own collection.

> 'Movement and structure are the keys to event dressing,' says Merchant. 'And quality cloth is everything.' Her most famous dial-999-emergency goanywhere frock is her aptly named 'Hero dress'. 'It has a very fitted top, very neat, so you can see form, but incredibly high on the waist, so it covers, well, everything,' she explains.

'It has a pocket – essential – I love the idea that you can pop a lipstick in your pocket and go.'

is being

I love it too, although the Merchant Archive dress that comes to Vienna with me is the long sculptural cloque dress, a version of which Nigella is wearing on Red's very cover. Inspired by an Edwardian silhouette with its almost leg-o'-mutton sleeve and high, high waist, the modern twist is in the fabric, which is almost »

weightless and makes the lucky wearer feel that she, too, is floating.

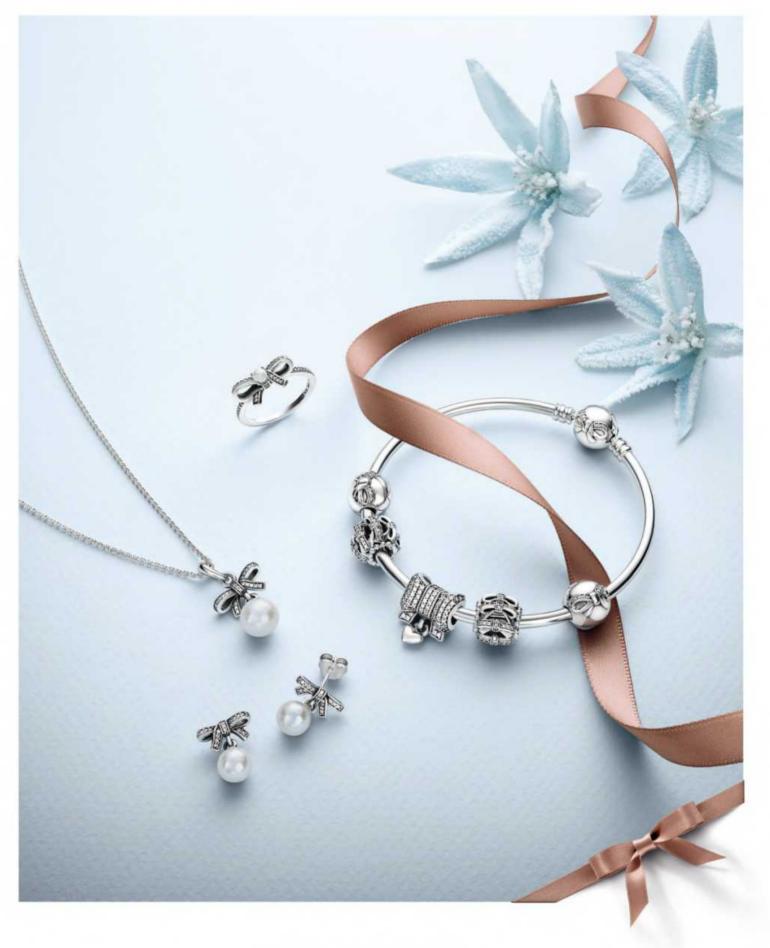
'The thing that makes you shine is being comfortable,' says Merchant. 'And take advice; we have fantastic floor staff.' I agree, a fitting can change everything. I've watched my other dress-code superhero, New York designer Kalinka, in a changing room with a client – a little pinch, a nip and a pin here, a whisk off to the tailors for a little adjustment and ta-da: Ava Gardner. 'I always know when people have found "the one",' adds Merchant. 'They stand differently, go on their

tiptoes even if they're not in a heel.' Take this, from a woman who knows.

See Sarah Bailey's party-season edit at REDONLINE.CO.UK







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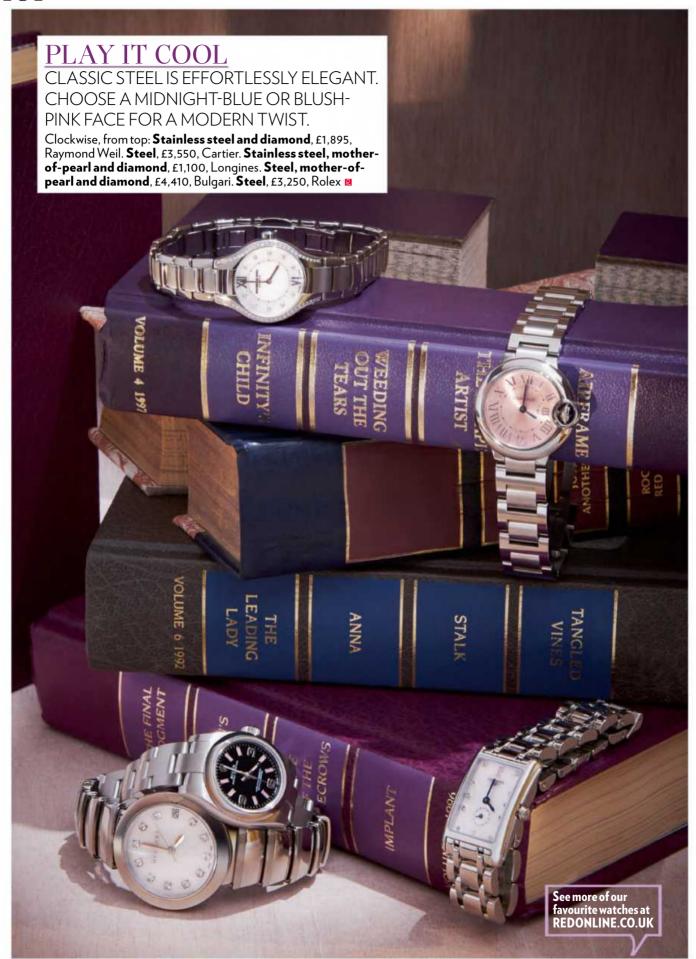


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Saves Lives campaign to a new high with a festive designer cashmere collaboration. Five of the UK's leading fashion designers have teamed up with e-tail Cashmere jumpers. giant Matchesfashion.com, and all proceeds from the £365 each, by (from left) Giles sale of each jumper will go to the Save the Children Deacon; Charlotte Olympia; Henry Holland; Christopher Kane Fund – which one's at the top of your wish list?

COFFEE-TABLE COUTURE



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ALL THAT GLITTERS

We're hoping to find a delicate ear cuff, charm pendant or sparkly star cuff from Z for Accessorize in our Christmas stocking this year. Designer Zara Simon's tips on stylish accessorising for the party season? 'It's all about layering - I'll be mixing stars and moons on chains with cool geometric stud earrings and loads of rings stacked on each finger. Metal I love pairing delicate earrings, with chunky, a look inspired by my mum. I was always mesmerised by her jewellery box - she had pieces she'd found on her travels including Greek jewellery mixed with modern costume jewellery from Kenneth Jay Lane, intricate gold pieces from Elizabeth Gage and lots of really cool trinkets.' 2

Words Alexandra Lunt. Photographs Nohalide Digital com. Nico Kidman sketch Garance Doré. For stockist details, see the Direc

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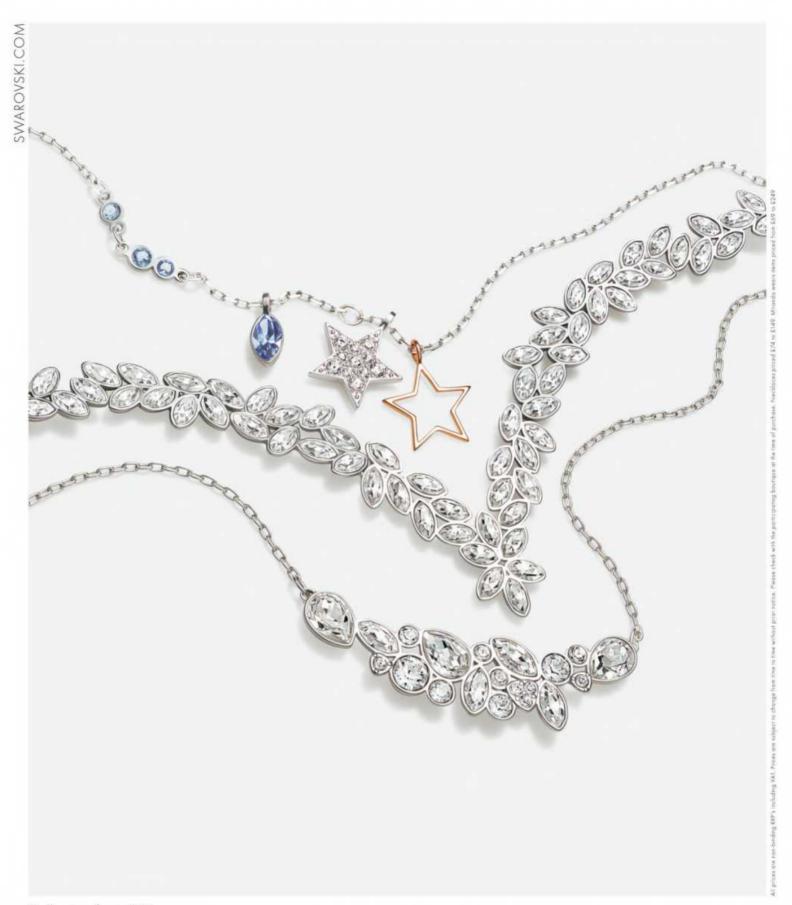
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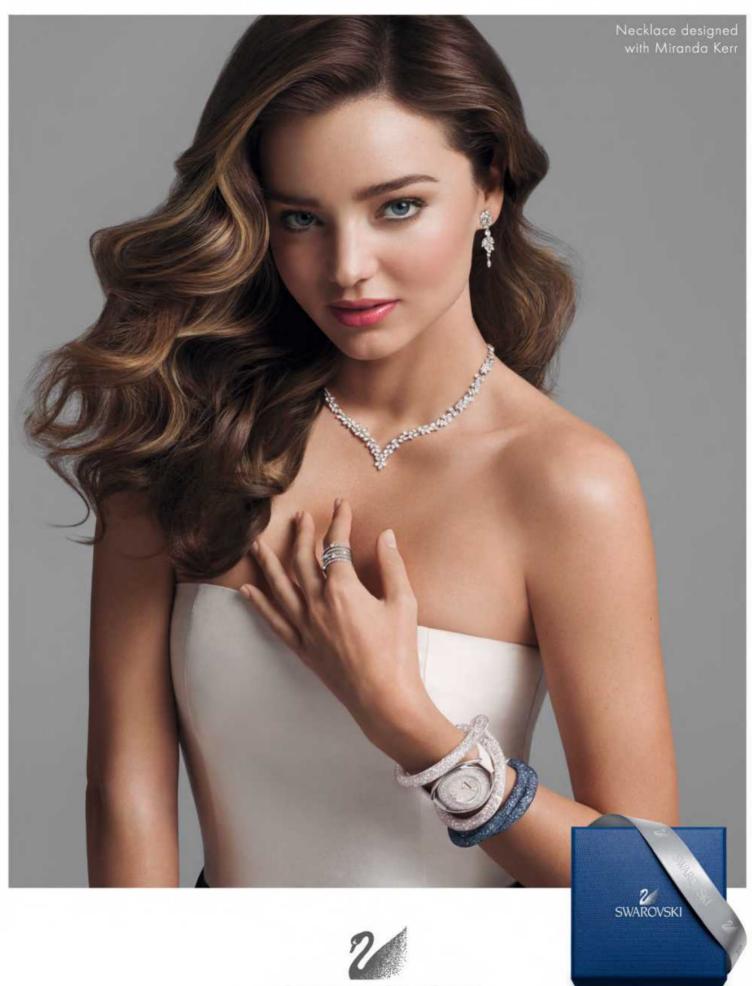






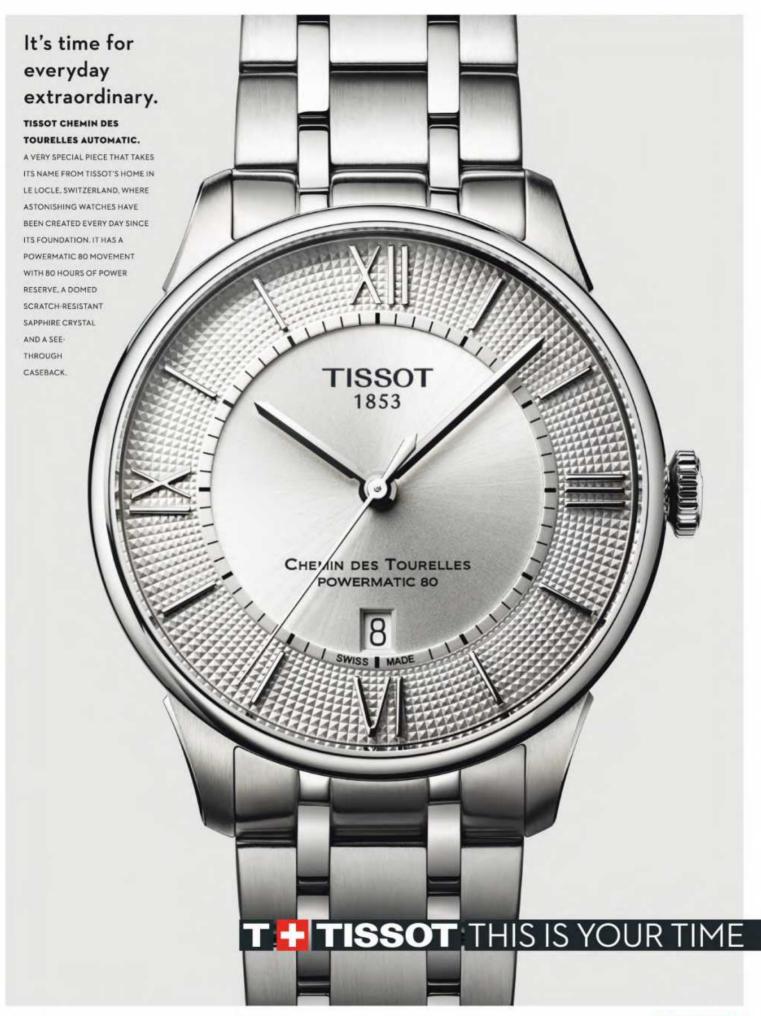
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SWAROVSKI





GIFT EDIT





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Reports



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ROSIE GREEN

Mind the gift gap

'I hold the

hardest

Our columnist wonders why the number of presents you buy are inversely proportionate to the quantity of presents you receive

9.59AM ON CHRISTMAS MORNING and the children can be restrained no longer. Pumped up by a pre-dawn gold coin fest, they force entry to the living room and stampede the tree. They scatter the last three remaining needles (should have coughed up for the blue spruce) and start distributing the presents Frisbee-style, treating them with all the care you'd expect from beings whose deepest desire is a guinea pig. After they've finished they sit, all but obscured by their verging-on-obscene tall towers (think a Minogue-height giant Jenga stack). A cursory glance reveals the oldies have a respectable smattering of parcels (mostly sherry-shaped) and even Alpha Male has somehow acquired a decent collection. I have three.

I, like you I'm sure, have bought upwards of 50 tokens of my regard. I have bought presents for my family and friends and my husband's family and friends. I've bought presents from my mum to my children, from my children to my mum. I've bought presents for the postman and my dog-in-law.

Now I know as a grown-up female you are meant to be all benevolent and it's true buy for (because I googled it) that Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. But THREE? Surely if He had spent the last month battling Oxford Street or logging hours on Notonthehighstreet personalising towels, even He'd be miffed if He didn't get so much as a bottle of His favourite Frankincense man-fume.

Of course it is all my fault. Because though I like to think of myself as a relaxed individual who believes it really is the thought that counts, I (we) know that's total crap. I hold the dubious honour of hardest person to buy for (official), which means people, understandably, don't bother. They know I will categorise all presents as follows. 1) THE 'SURPRISE' PRESENT. Deep down we all want to be blown away by an amazing present in the manner

of a Richard Curtis movie scene -

led outside to be shown a convertible mini wrapped in a huge red bow or watch a cockapoo puppy tear its way out of a box. Only if that did happen I'd want the cockapoo in a different colourway, and deep down think a vintage Fiat would have been a more stylish choice. 2) THE 'SPECIFIC' PRESENT. You know, the one you send a link for so there can be NO room for error. But upon receipt there is still a flicker of disappointment that it isn't a surprise. Also the presents where you've been asked what you'd like, but under pressure you've said something like a compost bin or garlic crusher (forgetting all the things in your Net-A-Porter basket).

3) THE 'GIFT TOKEN/CHEQUE' PRESENT. Tokens are pants because they a) get lost, b) immediately render

> everything in the shop undesirable and c) run out the day before you get there. Cheques are similarly fraught because if written by an OAP they are invariably in your married name. Plus, by the time you get to the bank you're so overdrawn it just gets sucked into the abyss of debt anyway.

4) THE 'ABSENT' PRESENT. My friends and I have agreed a present amnesty, which

is totally sensible but still disappointing. AM and I have occasionally said, 'Let's not get presents for each other' (which I've learnt the hard way he takes literally). Then there's the 'station present' (tea-bag tidy

from the tat shop on St Pancras concourse?), the

'kid present' (Mummy is always cleaning and therefore would really love some Cillit Bang), the 'delayed present' (the coat-in-the-sales promised on December 24th which becomes, due to budgetary adjustments, a pair of tights on January 17th). I could go on but I'm aware it's making me sound like a spoilt brat. I know I'm extremely lucky and family, health

and happiness are all I need.

Well, that and a receipt to return the tea-bag tidy...

Read more from Rosie at REDONLINE.CO.UK



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LANCÔME

AVA VIDAL



The joy of Twixmas

December 25th isn't the highlight of Christmas, says comedienne Ava Vidal. The festive season comes into its own in the days after

PERHAPS IT'S THE NON-CONFORMIST STREAK

IN ME, but I often find the 'main event' an anticlimax. I love the early rounds of Wimbledon, when it's still possible for some unheard-of young player to knock out the favourite. But by the time the finals arrive I've lost interest and am hoping they're over in straight sets so we can all go back to normal. And, as I've got older, this attitude has extended to the winter holiday season, too.

No one can forget the heady anticipation of Christmas

Day we experience as a child. In our house it started as early as October with the threats from my parents: if we children did not modify our behaviour there would be no presents.

The fact there was never any pretence about Santa Claus in our household made it even more special. Surely our mum and dad knew what we wanted better than any abstract figure in the North Pole? We'd be taken to toy shops and made to stand facing the other way so we wouldn't see what was being purchased, told that if we were caught peeking the item would be returned. I remember standing with my eyes squeezed shut and my fingers crossed so hard I'd get pins and needles. On Christmas Day I was never disappointed.

But as we get older, and when we become parents ourselves (my daughter is 21, my son 16, and I'm

expecting a third), everything changes. We're now the frazzled ones trying to ensure the trainers are the 'right' brand and the iPod has enough gigabytes. If you have to add in-laws to the mix, that only serves to further complicate things. There are a whole new set of people whose sensibilities need to be taken into account.

I know there are some people who love the whole thing, even as adults. My friend Jenny organises Christmas with military precision. She has finished her shopping by November. But no matter how well you plan, you can't plan for others coming along and messing everything up. Sit the

wrong two people next to each other for Christmas dinner and even the best-laid arrangements can be shot to hell.

But over the years I have discovered something wonderful. The magic of Christmas still exists, it's just shifted from December 25th to that often-overlooked period between Boxing Day and New Year: Twixmas.

For a child, this time might lack the excitement of the Christmas build-up, and those in their twenties probably want to fast-forward to New Year's Eve. But for me these

> days are not dull, they are a period to savour. Everything slows down. You can almost hear the nation collectively exhaling, 'And relax.' After the frenzy of the previous weeks, the calm is welcome.

> It's an almost otherworldly time when real life is suspended. Many of us don't have to work. The decorations are still up so that Christmassy feeling is still there. Children are not yet bored with their new gadgets, so are permanently occupied and still grateful enough not to slip back into 'You're the meanest mum in the whole world!' default setting. There is little need to cook because you've always

done too much food for Christmas Day and can live contentedly on leftovers.

This has become the space in which I like to reflect on the year that is coming to an end and plan for the next, without the pressure of people demanding to know what resolutions

I have made, as they do come January. I get to re-energise mentally and emotionally. I visit people I actually want to see, not those I have a moral obligation to. There are no rules. If I don't have to get dressed I don't bother. I just spend the day lounging on the sofa watching musicals and tunelessly singing along. Or reading a book in one sitting.

Yes, I know I will have to go back to work, but it is not at the forefront of my mind.

So if you find Christmas preparations leave you feeling frazzled, don't be disheartened. Twixmas is just around the corner.

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'It's an almost OTHERWORLDLY time when real life is SUSPENDED'



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t's a combination of serenity and cosiness,' muses Nigella Lawson. We're chatting about Simply Nigella, her latest culinary opus, and I've asked her if she can sum up its essence in one recipe. It's a question that initially seems to vex her a bit, before she settles on a dish that does indeed signify her new mindful and extemporary kitchen vibe: 'And that would be the cauliflower and chickpea salad with pomegranate seeds.

'In a sense I feel that this is the book. It's something that makes me feel very serene to cook. It's cosy. There's an earthiness

- chickpeas and cauliflower are so everyday - but it's quite transporting and quite playful, those jewels of pomegranate...' A slight pause as she warms to her point. 'But I'm equally happy to crumble over some feta, or some red onion. The thing about my cooking is I want to give people the inspiration. I know with that recipe in front of any reader, you could think of so many different ways of combining those ingredients. You know, life is a bit of a jigsaw puzzle and there are always lots of different pieces, on different days for different people.'

A jigsaw puzzle indeed. To better picture this conversation, I would ask you to imagine my 55-year-old interview subject curled up on a low leather sofa in Chiswick, west London, looking as regal and beguiling as Cleopatra, dressed today in a tightly cinched black jumpsuit from Wallis; her extraordinary Disney Princess skin as luminous as you would imagine it to be.

But the visual aside, what is really fabulous is sitting and hearing Nigella talk. She is incredibly poetic and loquacious with an epicurean delight for language itself: talking about her new favourite ham recipe (which, if I remember correctly, cooks for about a day with an entire tin of treacle), she describes there being 'something rather wonderful about the malevolent black glisten of the treacle as you pour it on'. Take that, Mrs Beeton.

And oh, how we've missed her voice. She has been a bit absent from our lives, of course, since her last book Nigellissima in 2012 and the seismic upheavals in her personal life that followed. But now she is back with a book that feels utterly relevant to now. 'Simply Nigella is her mission statement for where she is today – think



relaxed, friendly and informedly informal,' says Red's lifestyle director Pip McCormac.

I read the book in one sitting and was as swayed by her discourse on cooking as healing, sustaining, meditative and calming as by the recipes themselves. (Although I should stress there's nothing of the saintly holier-thanthou puritanism of the contemporary clean-eating brigade in there... to which subject we will return in a minute). She often talks about her recipe books as diaries. If Simply Nigella was really a diary what would it say on the first page, I ask. 'I think it would say, "I feel full of enthusiasms", and then a torrent of "I want to do this", "I want to do that", "This is interesting to me..."

LIKE MANY OF YOU, I SUSPECT, I'VE HAD A **CULINARY CRUSH ON NIGELLA FOR - LET'S SEE -DECADES NOW.** I'm no natural cook (but I like to think that, like God, Nigella loves a trier) and back in the 1990s I would tear her column out of Vogue (her marmalade and chocolate cake was quite a useful party piece for a domestic dud like me). When I met my future sisters-in-law – generous, miraculously relaxed entertainers like Nigella herself – I got properly acquainted with her oeuvre, as there was inevitably one of her books open on the kitchen counter (slightly dusty with icing sugar, spine cracked from overuse). And that's when I fully grasped the empowering message of the Nigella revolution: cooking and entertaining is not meant to be about perfection, but about participation and joy.

Talking to her today, it is of course impossible to forget the painfully public trauma of her divorce from second husband Charles Saatchi in 2013 and the prurient media circus that swirled on and on, getting a horrible second act with the trial of her former personal assistants. And if there is something in her manner today that feels just a little bit like a performance – as if when she left the house in the morning she decided >>





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RED ICON

to swaddle her naked self under several protective layers – well, really, who could blame her?

In her poetic, Nigella-ish way, she is baring her soul in her new book – inviting us into her new home (location: 'west-ish London') with its pretty, calming palette of soft pinks and greens and shelf upon shelf of old books. Her musings on recipes are – just as she talks – thoughtful, metaphorical and sometimes downright revealing.

She can't precisely pinpoint when the new book began to take shape. 'Really, I don't plan books; I cook, I live my life, then I see what comes out,' she says. 'I'm always going to be a slightly impatient cook. I'm always going to be a greedy cook. I'm always going to be the person who wants to enjoy what I'm doing at every stage. But some things have been quite pared-down because I've been cooking in rented kitchens, and not always using the same utensils. But the whole thing of moving into a new home meant I was cooking more often. I wanted people to come round.'

I mention how restorative I found the book. It reads like succour for the slightly battered soul. 'It is restorative, but it's also invigorating. We do get our energy and our strength from food, so you want food that gives you all those things. It doesn't break up into: [slightly derisive sniff] "This is good for you; this isn't good for you.""



MOVEMENT. 'So many times people pretend they're writing about health, but they're writing about wanting to lose weight and I think it's not good to merge these issues. It's very important for me to feel well and that my body feels in as good nick as it can, given my advanced age. But that seems to be about embracing all manner of food. As you say, I'm not

a minimalist. I'd rather think, "What can I add that'll make me feel better, rather than what can I take away?"

Later, when talk turns to the sense of wholesome pleasure and satisfaction she gets from her own kids being able to cook from this particular book, she continues that thought: 'I think why I am so cross with the cleaneating thing is more the term – I hate the implication that food is somehow dirty or to be ashamed of.'

There is a distinct interest in new flavours and ingredients in Simply Nigella: 'Gone are the lashings of butter for which she is famous, replaced with lighter ingredients, lemon, spices and a nod towards the Middle East,' as Pip McCormac puts it. She appears to have had at least one cooking epiphany on holiday with her children in Thailand at Christmas last year. In the book she describes watching 'a gorgeous and mesmerically



talented chef called, so perfectly, Tum' cooking Thai noodles with prawns. 'I'm not normally good at holidays, but Thailand was really absolutely wonderful. For me it was just ideal because I stayed in the shade. Not everyone was happy because the weather wasn't that good in the first week, but I was thrilled -I'm such a sun-phobe,' she laughs. 'We looked at the sea, ate lots of lovely food, went to food markets, saw such beautiful, inspiring ingredients and watched people cook.'

lsewhere in the book, she's filched inspiration from hipster-approved Brooklyn bakery Four & Twenty Blackbirds for her honey-pie recipe. 'I just became obsessed, obsessed - so much so that I made someone bring me back slices from there,' she laughs, a little roguishly. 'I get my inspiration from all sorts of people and places. Because I'm not a restaurant I'm not obliged to pretend everything is my own.'

Watching Michael Sheen on The Great Comic Relief Bake Off was the catalyst for her lemon-pavlova recipe, of which she is exceptionally proud, making the particular point that she wrote the recipe specifying a jar of lemon curd, with the make-your-own option only a suggestion; rather than the other way round. 'People beat themselves up for not being good enough all the time but, yes, you »





are doing it right if you buy a jar of lemon curd – as long as it's sharp enough - otherwise add a lemon.'

NIGELLA'S FORGIVING APPROACH TO CULINARY ARTS AND ENTERTAINING IS. OF COURSE. WHAT MAKES HER THE **ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS MUSE.** Her

philosophy for hosting is both wonderfully sanguine and exhilaratingly permissive: 'If there is too much pressure on you, you won't enjoy it. If you, as the person who is meant to be providing this great atmosphere, are not enjoying it, no one will.'

She can't paint a precise picture of how she will be celebrating the big day this year, 'except that I will have my family and probably some friends round as well. But I think as long as I'm with my children, it's home. I don't mind if I have to travel to where they are, or if we all have to travel, then that's irrelevant.' She still hangs stockings for Cosima and Bruno (her children by first husband John Diamond). 'When they were little, they would wake up very, very early on Christmas Day and now they don't necessarily...

'I think the tree and decorations are still very important for them,' she continues softly. 'Their father died when they were quite young, so in a sense, that triangle of us, that's how we are. So, really, it's about that - that ritual - and having too many leftovers in the fridge!'

Unsurprisingly, the festive dress code chez Nigella is utterly relaxed. 'I often do manage to get out of pyjamas at some stage. Although this last Christmas Day I think I was in a dressing gown the whole time.' But I sense a real excitement about decorating her new domain. 'Something on the pink spectrum in terms of baubles... it might be almost an oystery colour with a bit of pink in it,' she muses. 'I'm not a minimalist, but I don't like being swamped and overwhelmed. I might want 1,001 tea lights, but actually I want them to be plain. I just want the beauty of the light. There have been years when, apart from the edible decorations, I've taken all the decorations off and just left the light.' She smiles warmly: 'Being a messy person, I suppose you

have to know what your limits are. I don't mind not

lots of things going on, I might have a big bowl of

clearing the books off the coffee table, but rather than



NIGELLA IN BRIEF

BOOKSON YOUR NIGHTSTAND:

'Jeanette Winterson's reworking of *The Winter's* Tale, The Gap Of Time, Robert Harris' Dictator, because I love all things Roman, and Fates and Furies by Lauren Groff -I've heard so much about this and am saving it for when I start my postbook-tour reading binge.'

BEST FILM:

'Chef - this is such a feel-good film about food, with a fabulous soundtrack.

LAST PLAY YOU SAW:

'Red Lion by Patrick Marber.'

FAYOURITE JOURNEY:

'Any journey that takes me to the sea. It makes me feel uplifted and soothed.'

CLOSET STANDBY:

'A black Donna Karan and a pair of thick tights.'

WHAT'S ALWAYS IN YOUR BAG?

'Colman's mustard.'

pomegranates and lots of candles. I like light and beautiful smells.'

nd does she have a mantra for all us Red women facing the Christmas countdown and trying not to have a meltdown? 'I would just say the whole point is to make other people feel welcome. They're not coming to judge you. Having said that, family is involved, so maybe that's not quite right!' Cue much hearty laughter. 'I think it is really to say, "Keep it simple", because no

one wants to feel there's too much asked of them as the host or as the guest.'

Our time together is nearly up and conversation dots between her friendship with fellow chef Ottolenghi ('Such gentleness and wit... He's a very good eater too, which I like'), her preference for exercise that does not involve 'jumping up and down... you go cortisol crazy' (really, you have to love this woman) and the power of a good Charlotte Tilbury cosmetic ('Magic Cream!'). All of which leads me to report that while we might not yet be swapping leftover recipes over Twixmas, my crush on Nigella can remain proudly undimmed.

And so to the final chapter of Simply Nigella, intriguingly titled 'Beginnings'. It's about breakfast, of course, but this being Nigella it's also about life: 'I feel that out of endings come new beginnings.' So what is Nigella's new beginning? 'I don't have plans for it. I don't want to sound cheesy, but being in the present... Life unfolds often in ways we never expect it to, so it's best to be open to that.' And if she could sum up her state of mind in one simple word, what would it be? A pause. Then a smile and laughter: 'Expansive.'

Hair Bjørn Krischker at Frank Agency, using Kevin Murphy.

Make-up Lee Pycroft at My-Management, using Bobbi Brown. Additional styling Cheryl Konteh. Stylist's assistant Chloe Forde. Set design Laura Timmons. Set designer's assistant Rachel Mathewson. Location, thanks to Shoot Factory

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RED WOMAN

f multitasking means 'tidying your house and doing an interview at the same time', then Savannah Miller is a multitasker extraordinaire. The first thing that strikes you is her appearance (she is tall, willowy and just as beautiful as her actress sister Sienna), the second is her energy, which manifests in a reluctance to sit still; a leg-twitching, finger-drumming yearning to be doing things. She talks quickly, in long sentences, the de facto verbal style of a woman who has a lot on her plate.

It's fair to say her plate is groaning. Wife to Nick Skinner (an eco-builder; they met when she was 23) and mother to Moses, 10, Lyra, seven, and Bali, three, Miller divides her time between London and the Cotswolds. The former is where, for two to three days a week, she works on Nine, her fashion collection for Debenhams ('I stay with Sienna or Mum'), while the latter is home, a pretty cottage in a small village near Stroud. Needless to say, I am expecting Gwyneth Paltrow-style perfection (her stepmother is interior designer Kelly Hoppen, after all), but the place is in cheerful chaos. Rather than the anticipated taupe tones, the children are dressed in reassuring shades of normal (Crocs, leggings, fleeces), and the house is normal too, with dishes in the sink, children's drawings on the wall and the world's calmest dog sleeping peacefully in the kitchen.

Stepmum Hoppen is yet to visit the new cottage, which they bought towards the end of last year. 'I wish she would. No, she'd die if she came here because it's such a tip. Apart from these beds, everything in this house is inherited. This was my and Sienna's chest of drawers when we were growing up. Everything is a shambles and I really feel it's time we got it together, but we just can't afford to at the moment.' She flips up one of the bedroom rugs to reveal a bright stain on the carpet. 'Look! Nail

polish! What's the point?' She pauses. 'It just isn't important to me. The kids will grow up, they'll move out, I'll have a pristine and perfect home and I'll be miserable and lonely as hell.'

There is no time for loneliness now, or even much rumination, thanks to Miller's full-on commitment to

Debenhams. The real thrill, she says, is 'being able to meet the needs of every shape, size and age. I always wanted my clothes to be timeless, so that a 16-year-old and a 70-yearold could wear them. It feels good to meet the needs of

Previous page, Savannah wears: Wool jumper, £175, Topshop Unique. Embellished wool skirt, £6,250, Holly Fulton. Wool hat, £47, Christys'. Rubber wellies, £90, Hunter. Nick wears: Wool jumper, £40, Jeff Banks at Debenhams. Cotton T-shirt, £85, John Elliott; denim jeans, £335, Armani, both at Harvey Nichols. Moses wears: Cotton shirt, £37, Billybandit at AlexandAlexa. Denim jeans, from £20, J by Jasper Conran at Debenhams. Rubber wellies, £95, Hunter. Lyra wears: Cotton dress, around £450, Bonpoint. Glitter headband, £35, Crown & Glory at Etsy. Cotton mask. £17. Noé & Zoë Berlin at Alexand Álexa



more than one tiny demographic. It's harder working at a cheaper price point, because it's harder to achieve

'I always wanted my

clothes to be TIMELESS.

so that a 16-year-old

and a 70-year-old

could WEAR them'

that aesthetic with less to spend on cloth. It's much more of a challenge.

'I'm really proud of this collection - it feels like the first time in my life I've been really honest and clear about what I'm trying to say.' It's a radical departure from Miller's first label, Twenty8Twelve, which

she launched aged 28 and fresh out of Central St Martins, in partnership with Sienna. Now 36, she admits she was 'totally green', and is much more confident these days. 'As a woman, you know yourself so much better the older you get. The stuff I'm designing now is the stuff I'd have worn 10 years ago and will still wear in 10 years' time. We all need great jeans, great T-shirts, great knits. And as a mother-of-three, I have a more sympathetic understanding of what women want to wear, now that I've been every shape and size under the sun. I know who my woman is now.'

Ask her about being a working mum and she's refreshingly honest. 'I find it really hard. I'm a shambles. It frustrates me. I turn into a slightly different person – ≫



'Nick's a real HIPPIE,

wild guy, so to try

and PARK him in

London would have

FINISHED him off'

I have different clothes, different friends and a different life at work. And then I come home. You do have to take it down 10 notches to relate to children. When I'm at work I'm firing on all cylinders; I can jam a week's work into two days so I don't have to be away from them for too long. And then I come back and I'm an arsehole. And they're all

like, "Why are you being so mean?" I stress them out.' She sighs. 'I wish I did live in London, so I could come home every day and it would become more of a rhythm. It's so fragmented.'

The reason for their countryside existence is simple: Skinner. 'He was in Devon when I met him. He was

living in a bus. He's a real hippie, wild guy, so to try and park him in London would have finished him off."

Before I interview Miller, my editor mentions her time in 'the wilderness'. That's a bit harsh, I think. She hasn't shown a collection for a while, but 'wilderness'? It's only when I'm researching her that I realise Miller actually did go and live in real, live, bona fide, not-even-exaggeratedfor-effect wilderness. In 2013, she packed up her life and

went to live in Panama for the best part of a year, at the behest of Skinner, who really does seem the archetype of a 'hippie, wild guy', with a soupçon of insanity thrown in.

'Nick has always been one of those people who has this dream of living this wild, sustainable existence,' she explains. 'And I always felt like I was preventing

him from living that life, because I was chasing this... idea of creating some sort of stability for us as a family. So I agreed to go because his father had retired there, so he supposedly had these houses and this land. And I had in my mind the white muslin billowing in the breeze, and the children frolicking about, and

I would just be with the children on the beach... you know, the fantasy that everyone has. And the reality was very different. We got there, and the houses hadn't been built. It was an eight-hour drive from the airport. We arrived, and there was a tent. One of those big Coleman tents that had two sleeping chambers, but a tent nonetheless.'

At this point, many women might have burst into tears, shortly after throttling their husband. Not Miller. They »

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lived in that tent for four months, showering under a cold hose and living off packet food

because the fresh fruit and veg of their imagination was annihilated by the 96°F heat. She also had to learn to butcher a chicken. 'It made me realise who I am and what I need, and that has given me a massive amount of strength and power,' she says. 'I feel... not invincible, but I do feel connected to a part of myself that I might not have been before.'

The experience only made the Miller-Skinners stronger. 'Nick genuinely believed he was doing the best thing for the family. And actually in retrospect it was really good for us,' says Miller. 'Kids love that sort of thing. They had a wonderful time, swimming every day, not going into school... I tried to home-school them but

I was shit at it, because you have to be so disciplined and it was too hot - they couldn't concentrate.'

Sienna was 'horrified' at the Panama move, and provided some respite by flying her sister to Sorrento for their mother's 70th birthday. 'She gave me this amazing scent, and this beautiful Miu Miu bag. I used to go and lie in the tent with the bag, dousing myself in the perfume and saying, "It's going to be all right, it's going to be all right."

So the handbag calmed her? 'It fucking did! I don't care how superficial it is – these things make me feel good and that's just who I am!'

They returned to England last year. Even before the Panama adventure, there was no such thing as a typical Miller Christmas Day. 'I come from a

broken family, as does Nick, and we've got various siblings who've all married off into different families, so trying to get everybody vaguely in the same place is impossible,' she explains. 'Though last Christmas, Sienna rented a really amazing house in Somerset. We were all there for 10 days, and it was so nice because it wasn't like anybody was responsible - we got somebody in to cook Christmas lunch. It took off all the stress and we had a really fun day. Normally me, Mum and Sienna are all in the kitchen from early doors – in fact, we do this brine-ing of the turkey which happens the day before, so we're at it for 24 hours, the three of us – and then by the end of it we're tearing each others' hair out... kind of not the point of Christmas.'

Miller hasn't hosted Christmas herself for three years - and who can blame her, given the size of her extended family. Being away 'threw a spanner in the works – we don't really have any space, so we couldn't really put

Bali wears: Cotton top, £16.95; nylon tutu, £32, both Bob & Blossom. Cotton crown, £13.50, Noé & Zoë Berlin. Glitter shoes, £26, Boden **CLOCKWISE, FROM** ABOVE: Miller, left, with mum Jo, sister Sienna, stepsister Natasha Corrett and stepmum Kelly Hoppen, 2008; with youngest daughter Bali: and with Sienna at her Debenhams launch party this September everyone up. I'm not going to

rush to be doing it. If someone else wants to be doing it, great. Knock yourself out. Pass the wine!'.

'I feel... not INVINCIBLE,

but I do feel connected

to a part of MYSELF

that I might not have

been BEFORE

Whatever they decide, it's likely that the sisters will spend the day together. They seem touchingly close. 'We

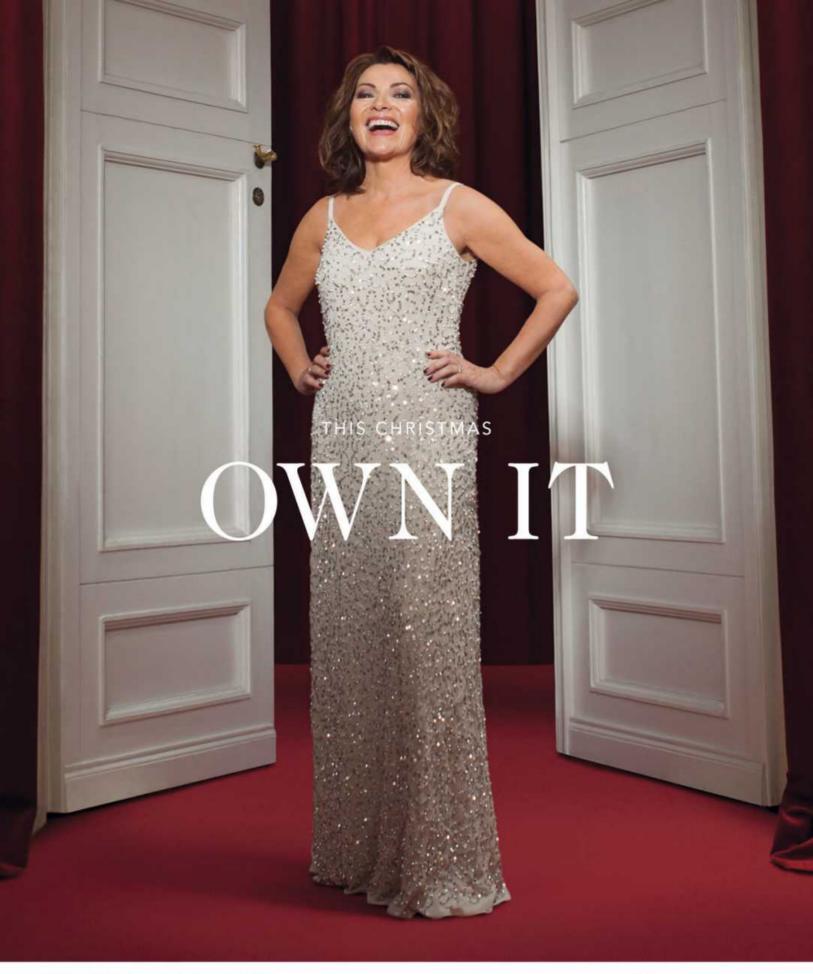
> think of each other as two halves of a whole,' says Miller, who is the elder by three years. 'When our parents split up, we felt like we only had each other. We were the only two people who were together all the time wherever we went, we went together. So we always had each other's backs.

Of course we scrapped, but the majority of the time we were just tight, because we kind of needed to be.'

Her children are 'obsessed' with cousin Marlowe, Sienna's three-year-old daughter with her ex-partner, actor Tom Sturridge. 'They talk about her all the time. And she calls them Moselyrabali, all in one word, like they're one person. We've actually decided they're going to be in a band. Sienna used to call Marlowe "Miss Delicious" when she was born. And then we had this whole conversation about how she looked better in earth tones, because that was her colouring. So we were like, "That's the name! Miss Delicious and the Earth Tones!"

Given their mothers' drive and determination, no doubt they'll be topping the iTunes chart circa 2030. Nine by Savannah Miller is in Debenhams stores and at debenhams.com

See Savannah Miller's favourite pieces from her Debenhams collection at **REDONLINE.CO.UK**



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PROFILE



THEATRES

GOVERNMENT ARDENS



anielle Ryan was the first girl to be born into her family in three generations, and meeting the unstoppable Irish entrepreneur, it's clear from the outset that she is very much her own woman. Straight-talking, down-to-earth and piercingly intelligent, it's no surprise that the 32-yearold's business portfolio defies the usual categorisation.

It would be a challenge to anyone to put a conventional label on Roads, the 'creative lifestyle brand' composed of a publishing house, production company and perfumerie that Danielle founded a year and a half ago (its name being a reflection of the way the choices we make shape us as people). Yes, books, fragrances and film production.

Along the way, Roads has become something of a cultural hub, nurturing and facilitating Dublin's burgeoning creative industries. Of her vision, Danielle says she wanted 'something that was business and culture together, so I started setting up Roads because I wanted the idea of a cultural brand that had lots of different mediums and incorporated everything I was interested in'.

She adds, 'We collaborate with a lot of interesting people around the world – artists, directors, writers and business people. We like to identify the macro issues – the major trends, if you like – and then filter those down into something that suits the company.'

TO UNDERSTAND DANIELLE'S VERY PARTICULAR KIND OF DRIVE AND THINKING, you need to look at what has made her the woman she is today. Parented almost exclusively by her father, she's the granddaughter of Ryanair co-founder Tony Ryan. Her father Cathal was a colourful, larger-than-life character who was training to be an airline pilot when he met Danielle's mother, Tess de Kretser, a Sri Lankan air hostess (a story Danielle describes with a chuckle as like 'something from a smutty novel'). They divorced after a year, and Cathal went on to have another daughter, Claudia, with former Miss Ireland Michelle Rocca.

Danielle also has a younger brother, Cameron, and an older brother, Cillian, so close to her in age that 'we're almost twins'. Of the many men in her family, she says, 'They were very stylish and very charismatic and a lot of fun as well.'

a huge responsibility As a child, Danielle travelled with her father, moving from Nigeria to Sri Lanka and, when civil war broke out in that country, back to Ireland. But in 2007, she lost both her grandfather and her father to cancer. They died within a few months of each other; her father was only 48.



Danielle, then pursuing an acting career, was 24. 'The two main anchors of the family were gone,' she says. 'My inheritance was a huge responsibility, and I had to come home to sort things out.'

The two main

ANCHORS of the

family were gone. My

INHERITANCE was

That inheritance was her father's legacy: he left

€35 million to charity in the shape of two major projects, and his dying wish was for Danielle to take them forward. The first was the creation of the Lir Academy in Dublin, an acting school developed with the help of RADA and in partnership with Trinity College Dublin. The second was a building programme of schools and hospitals in

Sri Lanka, eventually carried out in association with Unicef. Danielle's world of business diversity was born. Eight months after her father's death, she found herself sitting in numerous meetings in which she was not just »

PROFILE

the only woman, but also the youngest person in the room. The challenges she faced must have been colossal but, she says, 'It was what he [Cathal] wanted me to do, and I'd always rather be out there doing something.'

Danielle ran the Lir and Sri Lanka projects with a mastery of detail that is evidently characteristic of her. In Sri Lanka, she applied her business brain to the microfinancing that helped families get back on their feet. 'It's not usual to do this, but I personally oversaw every grant application. They had to explain what the money was for – 15 chickens, which they'd know how to rear because they'd had them before the war, for example. One of my big things is detail,' she says. 'I'm creative, but I'm not "the creative". I'm more a producer who can pull the projects together, and have the quiet confidence that we can figure it out problem by problem.'

Danielle is tiny, and – as is obvious in her shoot for *Red* – beautiful. When I see her she is zipped into a theatrical Giles Deacon number and resembles Pocahontas taking 17th-century London by storm in full Jacobean garb.

She brings a hard-headed financial nous to Roads. 'It's a way of structuring the creative side. Things have to exist in the real world and be commercially viable.'

The company currently has documentaries and nine feature films in pre-production. Future books, produced as limited-edition collector's items that are more objet d'art than paperback, include a definitive photographic survey of the life and times of Maria Callas ('I've actually started to dream about her').

Most original of all is Danielle's scent line. Each is conceived from the germ of an idea, that can be as abstract as 'technology', but however purely intellectual their origins, they operate, says Danielle, on a primal level.

'It's the original form of communication and we absorb it more than we know; smelling your baby's head, for example, produces a physical reaction. I love the idea that wearing a perfume sends someone a subliminal message about you – so they leave thinking, "I have this sense she's very sophisticated but I don't know what it is about her."

IN THEIR DIFFERENT WAYS, ALL THREE OF HER COMPANIES ARE CONCERNED WITH MEANING.

'A curator once expressed it to me like this: as a culture we used to be all narrative and no data; now we're all data and no narrative. So our aim at Roads is to find those narratives.'

Perhaps that love of narrative was nurtured during Danielle's time as one of the Stacumny Players, a travelling theatre company set up by her father and his brother in their home village of Stacumny in Co Kildare. 'From the age of 12 to 18 I toured with the company, and over 10 years we raised £1.1 million for charity,' she recalls. 'It was the literature I loved; that's what made me want to stay in acting.'

She subsequently won a place at RADA and began building a career for herself (credits include *The Tudors*, *Casualty*, *The Trial Of Tony Blair* – a TV movie starring Robert Lindsay – and a film starring Imelda Staunton and Vanessa Redgrave, which, she says regretfully, was never distributed).

ut that career path was not to be. Nearly
10 years on, Danielle's focus is her three
companies and two children (Carla, six, and
Ethan, three) with her husband Richard Bourke.
Near-weekly travel for work doesn't leave
much time for a Ryanair-ess lifestyle – but then 'sports
cars and yachts are just not my style', she says. Instead,
she goes for a run after work and is home at 5.30pm
in time to cook for her children and put them to bed.

'I love being a mum and I even like (some) housework,' she laughs. 'My husband will go out for the evening and then come back and find the kitchen spotless

After my FAMILY, the

most important thing in

my life is that I have the

ability to pursue IDEAS

and make them work

and say, "Have you been cleaning again?" and I'll say, "Yes! So don't touch anything!"

Every six weeks or so, the couple will go off on their own to a European city they've never visited before; in Dublin, date night might be dinner and a play. At home, she spends evenings watching movies ('I'm a film

nerd') or reading books that might one day make scripts. While so many of us suffer from 'imposter syndrome', refreshingly it seems never to have occurred to Danielle that she is anything less than unstoppable, whether it was managing her father's multimillion-pound charitable legacy at just 24 or rethinking, as she is now, the way that business and creativity can interact. 'After my family,' she says, 'the most important thing in my life is that I have the ability to pursue ideas and make them work; that I can be independent and travel and create

After an hour in Danielle's company I leave feeling invigorated. She's bright, determined and a natural facilitator. She's also a woman determined to do things her own way, one who refuses to be boxed in by convention, certainly where work is concerned.

things. If I wasn't doing that I'd be going up the walls.'

I can't imagine her ever quitting in her pursuit of ideas. And I can only see the world becoming a richer, more interesting place for it.

See Danielle Ryan talk about what being smart means to her at REDONLINE.CO.UK









Boys' pyjamas



Girls' coats



Girls' pyjamas





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PREMIUM COLLECTION

'KATE LEFT US A MANUA living

Writing about her terminal colon cancer, Kate Gross' humanity - and humour - touched us all. On the anniversary of her death, her mother Jean reflects on how their family will approach this first Christmas without her

year ago this Christmas we lost our daughter Kate, at the age of 36. She died at home, of advanced colon cancer, just 10 minutes before her twin sons Oscar and Isaac came out of their room and asked, 'Is it morning? Can we open our stockings now?' Bizarrely, it being Christmas actually helped us get through the rest of that day. You can't not give excited five-year-olds their Christmas. So there were stockings and presents to open, and a turkey to be cooked and carried off to Kate's housebound 100-year-old grandmother. We even ate some of it.

As Kate's death approached, she and her husband Billy had talked about whether or not it mattered that she make it to Christmas. They decided it didn't make sense to pin hopes on what, they agreed, was 'just another Thursday'.

SADNESS. It will That's probably how we'll approach find you if you do Christmas this year, too. Just another day, just another Friday. No more or less a day to feel sad than any other day. When you lose someone you think about them every day anyway. You're going about your everyday business and you bump into them, unexpectedly – through a scent, a place, a song, a kind word. So while birthdays and anniversaries have their shadows, they hold no particular fear for us.

twins, talking about the day their mum died, and how they felt at the time. Oscar drew a picture of a face with a line down the middle. 'It's half happy and half sad,' he told me. 'Sad because Mum died, happy because it's Christmas.' We'll take a leaf from Oscar's book and make that true this year, too. One of the things I've learned is that there is no point in running away from sadness. It will find you

There is no point

in RUNNING

AWAY from

I was doing some drawing a while back with the

if you do. So we walk towards it instead. On Kate's birthday in July, her incredibly strong husband Billy suggested that instead of hiding ourselves away, we take the boys punting on the Cambridge Backs, just as we had done the year before when Kate was alive, and gather a crowd of friends and family around us.

So we did, and it was a lovely day.

That's why we will not go away this year to some hot country where Christmas doesn't happen, as I'd sometimes thought we might. Instead, we will be at Kate and Billy's house as we have before, and re-enact familiar routines.

There's a great quote from a blog I read recently, written by Sheryl Sandberg after her husband died. In »



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it she described how she was talking to a friend about a father-child activity that her husband would not be around to do. They came up with an alternative plan. Sheryl didn't want it. 'I want Option A,' she cried. Her friend put his arm around her and said, 'Option A is not available. So let's just kick the shit out of Option B.' That is, I think, what we have tried to do over the past months.

IT HAS BEEN EASIER THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF WE HAD NOT HAD OSCAR AND

ISAAC AROUND. Living vigorously in the moment, as boys their age do, and thinking little of the past or future, they are extremely good at Option B. I've learned with a mixture of surprise and relief how resilient they are, and how easily they have taken to the fact that their mum is not there - and yet is still there, in the fabric of her house, in the morning milk and the music and the memories.

In her last months Kate wrote a book, Late Fragments, so that her sons may one day read it and discover who she was and what she held dear. In the final chapter, she says, 'For a long time my little family will no longer be four people, but they won't be just three either.' That has proved really true.

The boys are wired for HAPPINESS. and so AT HEART are we

The boys are wired for happiness, and so at heart are we. Kate noticed this when she was ill, and wrote movingly about it. After each hammer blow of diagnosis or failed treatments, she and Billy would stumble and weep, but within days of receiving the unreceivable news they would find a new normality. So it has been for us. We've quickly slotted into a new routine with the boys; Billy as amazingly capable manager of shopping, eating, cleaning and washing – discussing with his mates the merits, or otherwise, of using fabric conditioner – while remaining the all-round greatest-ever dad he's always been. I'm the backup picker-upper from school, story reader, shoe shopper, nagger, listener, admirer.

Kate left us all the instructions we need, in a manual that runs from where the party decorations are kept to how to de-fluff the tumble dryer. More importantly, though, in Late Fragments she left us with a manual for living - how to be less busy with the unimportant, how to recognise what really matters, how to experience wonder.

THERE WILL BE MANY WHO DO FACE THIS COMING CHRISTMAS WITH A HEAVY HEART. Once, when Kate

was ill. I used to stand on the concourse at King's Cross station thinking, 'How can all these people be walking around so happy and busy, while I am feeling like this?' But I was wrong. Kate's death somehow gave people permission to talk to me about their own losses, and from this I learned that those who look so shiny and blithe on the outside may well not be feeling that way. Almost everyone has their own sorrow – whether it's a failed relationship, a child you wanted and never had, a loved one who has changed and is no longer the person you once knew.

These sorrows tend to surface at Christmas, when we again can have the illusion that everyone else is happy. But we can all get through. My advice is simple. It's the Option B message – grab what you can from the mess, and make it the best it can be. And read Late Fragments, please – not just because my lovely daughter wrote it, and because it's funny and wise, but because truly it teaches us all how to deal with the impossible and still find joy in every day. Late Fragments: Everything I Want to Tell You

(About This Magnificent Life) by Kate Gross (William Collins, paperback, £8.99, and ebook, £4.49)

Read an extract from Late Fragments at **REDONLINE.CO.UK**



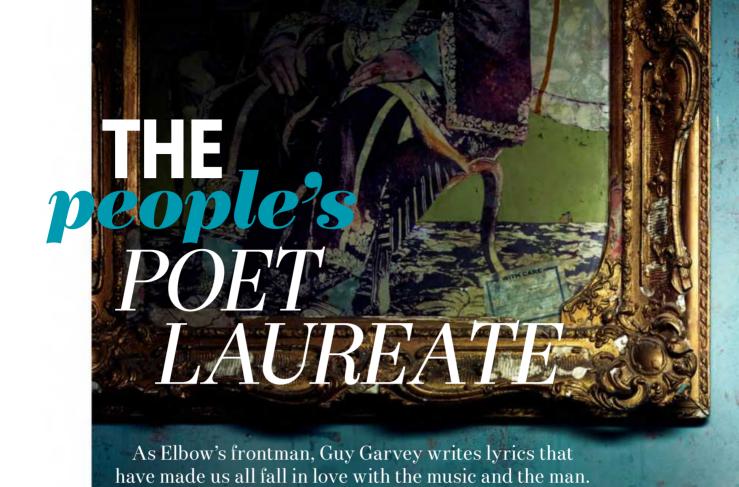
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Now, with new romance in his life and his first solo album, could he be releasing his best music yet?

Words SARAH TOMCZAK Photographs HAMISH BROWN Styling LAUREN T FRANKS

or our second date, my husband made me a mix CD. *The Bones Of You* by Elbow was the first track on it. I simultaneously fell for my nowspouse and the band's frontman Guy Garvey. The former was gentle and charming – and so was the latter, with his soulful Mancunian lilt and the way he managed to make real life sound so poetic.

Six years on, I have walked down the aisle to Elbow's *Starlings*, started my honeymoon watching the band at Glastonbury, and recently saw them at the OnBlackheath Festival, with our three-year-old and three-month-old daughters wrapped in blankets on our laps. You could say Guy Garvey has written the soundtrack to my life.

So that's why it feels momentous to be sitting beside him in a north-west London pub this rainy Monday morning. At 41 years old, he is as warm, attractive and bear-like as I had hoped. Tall and thick-set, his beard is dashed with grey, his twinkly eyes and jacket a tiny bit creased. He nurses a cup of coffee and hints at a strenuous weekend. And he has many more ahead, because this month Garvey releases his debut solo album, *Courting The Squall*.

Garvey is the only member of Elbow not to have kids yet, which he gives as an explanation for this new musical offering. 'At least half the songs on the last

record, *The Take Off And Landing Of Everything*, were to do with me splitting up with Emma Jane Unsworth,' he explains, of the end of his relationship with the writer and sometime *Red* contributor. 'We were together for years, it was the right thing for both of us, but when the sort of sadness had died away, I suddenly thought, "Well, I'm not going to be doing the things I thought I was going to be doing. I could spend some more time at the pub or I could do some extra projects outside of Elbow."

Garvey, who has been part of the band for over 20 years (they hit the big time with their award-winning album *Seldom Seen Kid* in 2008), tried out a bunch of different things: presenting an exclusive BBC iPlayer show called *Music Box*, writing an autobiography (still a work in progress), acting (he was offered the part of a gladiatorial ringmaster in *Game Of Thrones*, but was touring, so turned it down) and producing a solo album.

Recorded in eight short weeks, with his 'favourite musicians outside Elbow', *Courting The Squall* was Garvey's chance to take some risks. 'That pushy, violent wind at the edge of the storm, that's the squall,' he explains, 'so courting it is about flirting with the edges of danger.' The album is definitely a bold departure from Elbow. It mixes groove ('which was like a dirty word for "







us because we used to be a terrible funk band,' laughs Garvey), jazz and even Afrobeat. But the lyrics are as perfectly conceived as any Garvey has penned before (my favourites are from Juggernaut: 'You were cursing the folly of a three-dollar brolly, in your after-work make-up and still-at-work shoes'), and his voice is as velvety as ever.

He admits that working autonomously meant 'having insecurities about it being any good – not having the rest of Elbow to bounce off was weird'. But, he says, 'The process has been a joy. There are sad moments, lyrically, but for the most part, it's celebratory, or reconciliatory, if that's a word.'

IF IT FELT LIKE GARVEY WORE HIS HEART ON HIS SLEEVE ALREADY. THEN COURTING THE SQUALL IS AN EVEN DEEPER INSIGHT INTO HIS EMOTIONS. He

flits from the hazards of dating in your forties, to late-night sexual encounters, to poignant reflections on past love. The title track, for instance, paints a picture of a man building a house of 'wrestle rock shale' for himself and an impending family – the one that Garvey never ended up having.

'A lot of the lyrics were too raw to put out at the time,' he admits. 'For me, but for my ex, as well. I don't want to go too far into it because it compromises her, but I felt that this was an honest sentiment that I felt right in the middle of me. That stuff is a) difficult to find and b) I almost feel a small sense of responsibility to put those things out there, particularly if somebody else might be feeling them, too. That chorus is very definitely about: "I'll go build us a house, you think about building us a baby."

Garvey and Unsworth were together for a decade (most of the romantic stuff on Seldom Seen Kid was written for her), yet despite their split two years ago, they have

managed to achieve the relationship holy grail of staying friends post-break-up. He says it's 'down to the mutual respect that never faded. There were no crimes committed, nobody did the dirty on anybody. Even though we both knew that it wasn't right any more because we wanted different things, the affection, support and friendship didn't ever go anywhere. Neither of us regret a second of it'.

'I feel a sense of RESPONSIBILITY to put things OUT THERE, particularly if somebody else might be feeling them'

When I ask Unsworth for her take, she says, 'He is one of the great loves of my life. I can't imagine not being pals. His friendship and support have helped to shape me. Very early on, he said something that stuck. He said: "Do you realise you're already the woman you want to be?" What a charmer! I still think about that sometimes.

'But as well as being generous and kind and the ultimate gentleman, he has steely integrity. He is stoical about being an artist. He taught me to persist, to give up the day job. I have so much to thank him for. Luckily, I can repay him with all my best jokes and stories, which he steals and puts into songs.'

The pair still share a 'joint ideas account', into which they put their best creative musings. 'The way the day begins decides the shade of everything' appears in both Unsworth's book Animals and the Elbow song New York Morning, 'because we both dispute who wrote it!' says Garvey with a laugh.

Yet they have both moved on, too. Unsworth to 'her fella Ian, who she lives with in Brighton, a lovely man', >> WE DISCUSS THE PITFALLS OF DATING AS

and I both laughed about the fact that, of course we've had quite a bit of life experience by this point,' he says, grinning. 'I've been sexually active for 25 years! You can't pretend you've not been around.' But alongside the shadowy sexual history, Garvey says there's something wonderful about falling in love as a grown-up.

'It's a different time. You're obviously older, it's a bit soberer. If you're single at 40, chances are you've either tried something and failed or you've made a bad decision or something's run its course, as had happened with me. All of those things can be referred to as "baggage". But it's valuable life experience. I now know who I am, at this age. And when you know yourself better, you're not going to be led down a road you don't want to go down. You find the middle ground a lot easier.'

So are a home and a family back on the cards? 'Dunno,' says Garvey with a shrug — it's the first and only time he clams up during our interview. He softens quickly though and adds, 'I'm just really enjoying romance at the moment and finding somebody different brings different parts out in you. Do you know, the really strange thing is, Emma did an article called *How to cohabit (and live to tell the tale)* and it was the 10 dos and don'ts of moving in with a partner. Me and Rachael use it as a blueprint!'

Unsworth isn't the only woman who's influenced his lyrics. Garvey also credits his five sisters for his heart on the sleeve-ness – growing up in a house full of women is bound to get you in touch with your feminine side. 'I've always had the company of women,' he says, 'And two of my three very best friends are girls. They can help you through your life in a way blokes can't. Ours was a very small house in retrospect, with five sisters and my mum in there, all of whom are very emotionally fluid. Just overhearing conversation, that shapes you, doesn't it?'

And while Garvey and his mates were 'always huggers' who talked about their feelings, he's keen to muse on why the next generation of boys feel such pressure to conform to masculine stereotypes – and why that's such a bad thing.



modern parents is going to be internet pornography and the way it portrays women, and shapes the way boys think about sex,' he says. 'Once a kid learns about sex, there's a loss of innocence – it's almost like finding out there's no Santa Claus. You want to preserve it for as long as you can, that magic and that not knowing. You've got to get in there early now and say, "Look, this is what intimacy is, this is what women are like, and this is sex." Teaching them to be emotionally open immediately

'I think the biggest challenge of

emotionally open immediately helps. And encouraging your boys to knock around with girls.'

Garvey still 'knocks around' with his sisters. He tells me an amusing anecdote about mentioning his 'sister' in the Elbow song *Scattered Black And Whites* and how each of them had a roundabout way of asking whether it was her

he was referring to ('I told them all the same thing: "Don't tell the others, but it was you!""). He also likes to host them all for Christmas, as his north Manchester home has 'plenty of room, an enormous table and it's just cosy'. Although he refrains from cooking as he's 'dreadful' and says, 'There's shitloads of us so we take it easy on the presents, too. We do little gifts. I've got 10 nieces and nephews so there can be 20 or 30 of us in total.'

This year may be a little different though – Garvey plans a quiet festive break with just Stirling and her mum (who happens to be legendary *The Avengers* actress Diana Rigg). I get the feeling that after a full-on 12 months,

'I now KNOW who I am, at this age. And when you know yourself better... you find the middle ground EASIER'

he's looking forward to a whole lot of nothing. But only for a few days, because then he'll meet up with the Elbow boys in January to write the band's seventh album.

And that's not all. He also fancies sound-designing a film, recording a Bond theme and will, of course, be busy conducting his cross-country romance with London-based Stirling via Virgin Trains. The rail company has actually offered him free travel in return for becoming its poet-in-residence. And who better to muse on love, life and the queue in the buffet car? Because if there's one thing Guy Garvey does, it's make the real world that little bit more beautiful. And that's just one of the reasons I – and

perhaps you – are so smitten.
Courting The Squall by
Guy Garvey is out now

Hear Guy Garvey's life-shaping playlist at REDONLINE.CO.UK



Stay fresh all day long with Sure Compressed. Designed to last just as long as the big can, with the same amount of protection, it won't let you down

'Compressed has

been chosen by

nine MILLION

women** lasting

just as long as the

big can'

ou've got an important meeting, you're running late, and the last thing you want to do is arrive looking

stressed. At least knowing that your

antiperspirant is working is one thing to help you get back on track and focus on the important things.

Designed intelligently to work as hard as you do, Sure Compressed (125ml) lasts just as

long as the big can when used in the same way, and will provide you with the same amount of protection - with the assurance of a money-back guarantee*. The difference is it uses only half the gas, resulting in a smaller, smarter can and a softer

spray. And being compact in size, it also fits perfectly into your handbag, gym or travel bag for added convenience. Now you never have to be anywhere without it. Nine million women have already chosen a

Compressed antiperspirant**, no wonder one is sold every three seconds[†].

Life can get stressful sometimes, but it's good to know that Sure Compressed

won't let you down, helping you to feel fresh and protected every day. Sure Compressed antiperspirant is available nationwide at leading retailers, RRP £3.29***.

ON THE MOVE



Kimberly Wyatt is working with Sure Compressed after becoming a convert herself. The dancer

and TV presenter lives a very busy life and explains: 'Sure Compressed releases less gas and with a softer spray, feels more gentle on the skin but still provides the same amount of protection in each spray. It gives me confidence whatever I'm up to, whether running after my daughter or working out. It's perfect for daily use and is both my bathroom and handbag essential.' And with Compressed antiperspirant being chosen by nine million women**, there's no denying its popularity - when something works this well, why try anything else?





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SHAY & BLUE









PIONEER

'I used to be terrified of public speaking... until I started speaking with my friend, Dorothy Pitman Hughes. She was fearless. And, in tandem, we attracted audiences neither of us would have on our own. Ultimately, she allowed me to discover and harness the raw power of being in a room with other women.'



WITH HER MOTHER RUTH IN 1972, AT OBERLIN COLLEGE, OHIO

> 'When I look at this photograph of my mother and I at Oberlin College, I think about how much that moment meant to us. I imagine she must have had both good and bad feelings about it - good feelings to return and see her daughter speak; bad feelings because she herself had to leave [after one year, before her family ran out of money]. I actually think a lot of us are living out the unlived lives of our mothers. Mine certainly paid a high price for caring so much, yet being able to do so little about it. Like many of us, I have regrets about the things I didn't have time to do with my mother. In a way, though, she led me toward an activist place where she herself could never go. I had seen what it was like for a single woman to try to raise a child with no money and I was determined that would not happen to me. I wanted to be able to do what I loved as my mother couldn't.' 🛮 My Life On The Road by Gloria Steinem (Oneworld, £14.99)

A PORTRAIT TAKEN IN 1974



With 160 good calories in a handful, there's no snacking worries at all. **ALMONDS. SNACKING GOOD.**



RECCES

Edited by HANNAH DUNN





READS





After her triumphant return to the stage last year, this collection of images taken throughout her life cements our eternal love affair with Kate Bush. In Kate: Inside The Rainbow by John Carder Bush (Little, Brown, £40), the singer's brother reflects on her vibrant childhood and career.

FOR THE FILM BUFF:

Sixty years after the actor's death, Dennis Stock: James Dean by Dennis Stock (Thames & Hudson, £24.95) brings together iconic images of Dean, first captured by Stock for Life magazine back in 1954, and recently immortalised in the film Life, starring Robert Pattinson.

DENNIS STOCK JAMES DEAD



FOR THE ART LOVER:

There's a reason why Jane Bown garnered the nickname 'Tenacity Jane', for the woman never missed a shot. And in Jane Bown: A Lifetime Of Looking (Faber, £30), edited by her friend Luke Dodd, you can see her magic touch at work with portraits of everyone from Mick Jagger and Margot Fonteyn to miners, fishermen and dancing girls. Exquisite.

Let them read

Struggling to find the perfect Christmas present? Everyone loves a coffee-table tome





HE INEXPECTED AND UNSCHEDULED

FOR THE BEST DRESSED:

With Fashion's Front Line by Niall McInerney and Nilgin Yusuf (Bloomsbury, £25), you can take a front-row seat at some of the most iconic fashion shows of the past three decades. From candid snaps of famous faces in the audience to never-before-seen shots of the manic backstage world, McInerney has captured runway magic forever. >>





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It's okay to ask QUESTIONS, you don't have to KNOW IT ALL'

With the release of her 12th book this month, CECELIA AHERN talks writing rituals and asking stupid questions with Hannah Dunn

Tell us about your new book, The Marble Collector.

It's about a father suffering from a stroke and his daughter, Sabrina, who finds a collection of marbles she never knew existed. She sees there are some missing, so takes a day out to find them, and discovers her father had this secret life. It's a mystery, but it's also a father-daughter love story.

This is your 12th novel. Does writing get any easier?

There are days when it flows very very well and I'll dance home. And then there are days where I'm stuck and nothing comes at all. I had to rewrite all of Sabrina's journey – I've never done that before – but I didn't panic. It doesn't necessarily make the telling of the story easier, but you do learn from your mistakes and you have the confidence to keep going.

Do you have any writing rituals? I write a chapter longhand and type it up after, so immediately I'm getting a second draft. I just love physically writing, I love pen and paper, and I love my little notebooks. I love gathering everything together.

Which book are you most proud of? I always say my most recent, because I believe that is my best work. But I think in terms of my career, PS I Love You was the most important,

because it was the first, and it got my whole career going - it changed my life. And then the movie came...

What's it like seeing your books on the big screen?

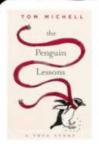
You have to lose characters, you have to change elements, but as long as they get the heart of the story, they keep my core character and the ending doesn't change, I'm okay with everything else. It's amazing to see something I've just come up with in my mind come alive. Meeting the actors is also overwhelming - it's not about meeting big stars; I'm meeting the characters who have walked out of my book, and that's a surreal feeling.

What piece of advice would you give your younger self?

To ask more questions. I thought I was supposed to know things I clearly didn't know. I'd feel like I had to nod along and try to join in. And the older I get, the more stupid questions I ask. It's okay to ask questions, you don't have to feel like you know it all. And your all-time favourite book? The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger. I've only read it once, and yet it just stays with me. I thought it was so clever, so beautiful and dark, and a lovely love story as well. The Marble Collector by Cecelia Ahern (HarperCollins, £16.99)



READS



Christmas comes early

Festive spirit is flowing in The Penguin Lessons by Tom Michell (Penguin, £9.99). A penguin

pulled from an oil slick on a Uruguayan beach is adopted by a schoolteacher and taken back to boarding school, where he is loved and cherished and becomes a swim coach. And the best bit? He's called Juan Salvador. ≫





SARRA MANNING

Your CHRISTMAS reading list

Along with tidings of joy comes the opportunity to up your reading game. Sarra Manning picks the best new releases to add to your list

If You Go Away by Adele Parks (Headline, £7.99; out Nov 19th)
Parks' second historical novel, set during the First World War, charts the impossible love affair between unhappily married Vivian and handsome playwright Howard, a conscientious objector. Beautifully written and surprisingly gritty.

Half The World In Winter by Maggie Joel (Allen & Unwin, £8.99) As the days get colder and darker, nothing warms me more than a period novel. Reminiscent of Kate Summerscale and set in the Victorian era, two men of very different social classes both lose their daughters in tragic accidents.

The Clasp by Sloane Crosley (Hutchinson, £12.99)

Memoirist Crosley's debut novel deserves all the hype. Old college friends Kezia, Nathaniel and Victor, made bitter by adulthood, end up in Paris hunting a legendary necklace. A smart, witty read with a lot of heart.

Wildflower by Drew Barrymore (Ebury Press, £12.99)

Part autobiography, part musings on life, Wildflower is as delightful as Barrymore herself. This is no ghostwritten puff job; you can hear her voice as she writes with real humour and perception about life in the harsh glare of a camera lens.

Hunger Makes Me A Modern Girl by Carrie Brownstein (Virago, £16.99) Feminist icon Carrie Brownstein's acutely observed memoir is of a life spent mostly in a tour van. Blow jobs, Riot grrrls and break-ups all feature in this glorious, grungy paean to losing yourself in music. A Notable Woman: The Romantic Journals Of Jean Lucey Pratt edited by Simon Garfield (Canongate, £20) 'It is spring and there is no one here to make love to me; that is the trouble.' Spanning over 60 years, Jean Lucey Pratt's delightful diaries draw a vivid picture of an extraordinary woman.

The Yellow Diamond by Andrew Martin (Faber & Faber, £14.99)
Featuring Russian oligarchs, supercars, champagne and some

serious bling, this is a slick, clever crime caper through the world of the mega-rich. Perfect if you fancy an old-school cops-and-robbers read.

The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende (Simon & Schuster, £16.99) I gave up on Allende quite a few books back so I'm delighted that The Japanese Lover is a welcome return to form. An against-the-odds love story that spans cultures and decades, but shies away from sentimentality.



Photograph Full Stop Photography



Seventies luxe to your wardrobe with George at Asda

FIND YOUR

SWITCH-OFF STYLE
Get into the festive spirit and plan your chilled-out-days wardrobe with help from fashionunexpected.co.uk.
You'll find hints and tips to keep you looking stylish over the Christmas break.

Cape, £16. 3 in 1 Top, £20. Jeans, £20. Bag, £14. Boots, £20

George

#FASHION UNEXPECTED



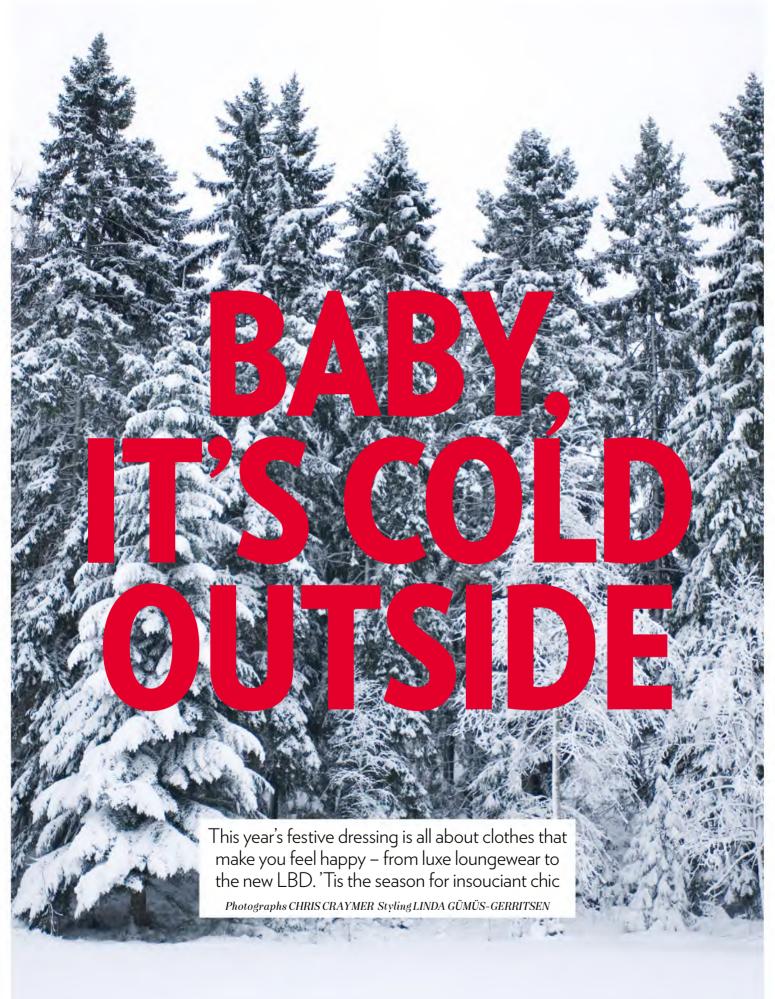
JENNIFER LOPEZ SILVER BRACELET

Photographs Chris Craymer

asmon

Edited by NICOLA ROSE









Duvet days call for cosy throw-ons. How to add that individual touch to your outfit? By knitting your own woollen accessories, of course

Anja wears: **Cotton top**, £70, MHL by Margaret Howell. **Wool hat**, £9.90, Uniqlo. **Ring**, as before Edison wears: **Wool jumper**, £1,020; **wool twill trousers** (just seen), £645, both Giorgio Armani. **Alpaca hat**, £195, Raquel Allegra

















Fine, mismatched chains in shades of gold lend a warm, dewy tone to winter skin. Layer them up and take your neckline as low as you dare for maximum impact

18ct rose gold and diamond earrings, £4,940; 18ct rose gold necklace (long), £9,690; 18ct rose gold ring, £4,570, all Hermès. 18ct rose gold necklace (top); 18ct gold necklace, £4,500 each, both Tiffany & Co. Leather shirt, £595, MiH Jeans



Graphic, chunky jewels in black, gold and blue elevate denim for evening. Tip: the new dungarees are super-tailored and super-feminine – Seventies styling never looked so chic

18ct rose gold and jet earrings, £5,200; 18ct rose gold, jet and black diamond necklace (long), price on request, both Pomellato. 18ct Fairmined gold pendant and 18ct gold chain, £2,550, Chopard. 18ct beige gold and leather watch, £8,100, Chanel. 18ct gold cuff, price on request, Chanel Fine Jewellery. Rings, from left: 18ct rose gold, black jade and diamond; 18ct gold, lapis lazuli and diamond, both price on request, both Cartier.

18ct gold, price on request, Chanel Fine Jewellery. Denim dungarees, £715, Natasha Zinko at Browns



Oh-so delicate but stamped with classic Vuitton flair, these pretty double hoops add elegance to every outfit. Match them with the necklace and keep the rest of your look simple

18ct gold, white gold, rose gold and diamond earrings, £2,960; 18ct gold, white gold, rose gold and diamond necklace, £2,960, both Louis Vuitton. Steel watch, £1,700, TAG Heuer. Denim shirt, £170, AG Jeans



Christmas calls for sparkle – go all out with diamond-dusted denim and a dazzling silver cuff. Then add a cool cocktail ring, a necklace or two and you're ready to party

18ct rose gold, diamond and lapis lazuli necklace (top), £1,160; 18ct white gold necklace, £8,200, both Bulgari. Sterling silver cuff, £935, Natasha Collis at Browns. Steel and diamond watch, £3,550, Dior.

18ct white gold, diamond and lacquer ring, price on request, Dior Joaillerie. Denim jacket, £54.95, Gap.

Blue velvet belt, £120, Paul Smith. Denim and diamanté jeans, £860, Tu Es Mon Trésor at Browns



Gucci's intricate rose gold lattice designs offset floral lace to perfection. Contrasting pinkie rings give a fresh finish and feel just decadent enough

18ct rose gold earrings, £1,980; 18ct rose gold bracelet (top), £4,910; leather and metal watch, £595, all Gucci. 18ct rose gold, white gold and diamond necklace, £5,000, Piaget. Rings, from top: 18ct rose gold and diamond; 18ct white gold and diamond, £1,100 each; 18ct gold and diamond; 18ct white gold and black rhodium, £625 each; bracelets, from left: 18ct rose gold and diamond; 18ct gold and diamond, £3,350 each; 18ct white gold and diamond, £3,400, all De Beers. 18ct gold and grey pearl ring, £3,335, Dina Kamal. Denim shirt, £90, Calvin Klein. Red lace top, £650, Gucci. Denim jeans, £221, Frame Denim



If you want to make a statement, black baroque pearls are a sure-fire winner. Richly, darkly beautiful, wear with blue-black denim for extra drama

18ct gold, mother-of-pearl and onyx earrings, £5,500, Van Cleef & Arpels. Black South Sea pearl necklace, £7,700; black South Sea pearl and diamond ring (left), £1,650, both Mikimoto.

Stainless steel and leather watch, £5,280, Omega. Rings, from top: 18ct white gold, £2,030; 18ct rose gold, white ceramic and diamond, £860, both Chaumet. Denim jumpsuit, £370, Frame Denim



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Words and styling Kim Parker. Photograph Enzo Truoccolo. For stockist details, see the Directory









The festive gift everyone's buzzing about. Our skin-changer is dermatologist-developed to gently lift the makeup, dirt and oil that hand washing may miss. Oh, the healthy glow...the purified-looking pores. And moisture just sinks in. A great gift for all skins—to give, and to get.

Clinique Sonic System Purifying Cleansing Brush



ALL DRESSED UP...

Good times are guaranteed with the season's most effortless face and hair enhancers



in Deeper, £43



and layers of skincare to create quenched, plump-looking skin.
Mary Greenwell used Hydra Beauty Micro Sérum (£66; right), followed by Hydra Beauty Eye Gel (£40), and Sublimage La Crème Fine (£240; top), all by Chanel.





GET EVEN Use a tinted moisturiser to even out skin; pat out dark circles and blemishes/redness with a little concealer.

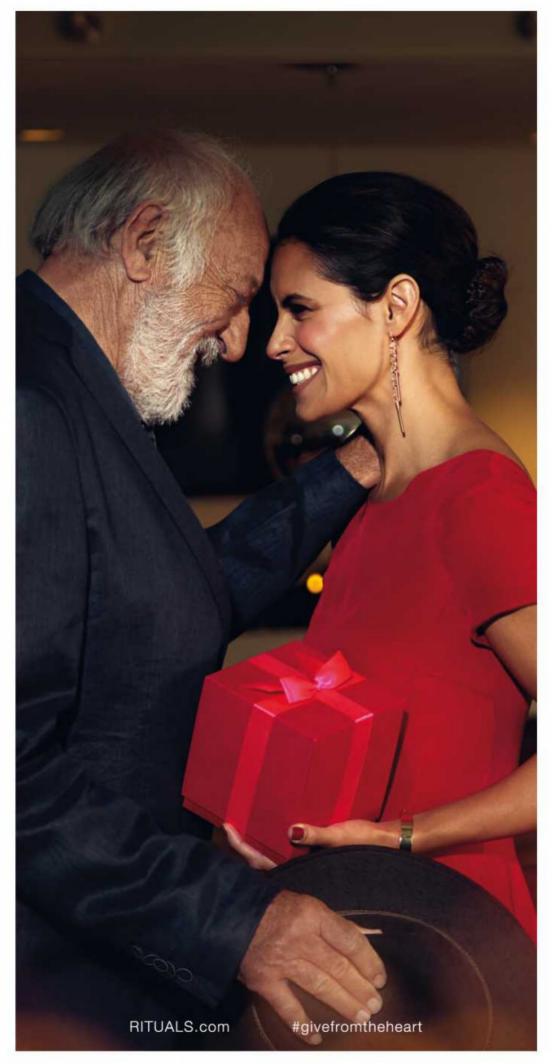


ADD DIMENSION Chanel's new

Chanel's new highlighter Joues Contraste Lumiere in 12 Coups De Minuit (£31) provides gentle

warmth, as well as light, and can be used wherever you want to subtly set and define skin. If sallow, use a pink blush to inject colour and increase your skin's brightness.







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THE BEAUTY BOOST

This year, the B. Beauty range, exclusive to Superdrug, has your festive look covered – looking good at Christmas has never been easier

he party season is here – think busy diaries, late nights and lots of sparkle.

And who doesn't need a little beauty pick-me-up as the festive fever gets underway? Whether you're applying a slick of pillar-box red lipstick or rejuvenating your skin with an overnight facial mask, B. has all your needs covered, to give you an instantly noticeable beauty boost.

Women with busy diaries this season, like make-up artist Cassie Lomas, rely on trusted superhero

'If you need a QUICK cleanse there is no BETTER way to freshen up the SKIN than a micellar wipe'

products – from pure Micellar water to nourishing day and night creams – to see them through the festive period.

These beauty fixes will add the final touches to any party looks this season. What's more, whether it's the perfect shade of lipstick or a glamorous pink blusher, the right beauty product can put a spring in your step and lift your spirits, too. Read on for everything you need to turn heads and stand out from the crowd this Christmas...



LIP SERVICE

'A lip is my go-to for instant glam,' says make-up artist Cassie Lomas. For party season, she explains that 'choosing a matte texture gives a stronger lip line with ultimate hold.' There are four red shades in the B. range, perfect for all skin tones, with a light and creamy texture and a very matte finish.

If it's the groomed and glamorous look you're after, then it's important to start with the right

beauty tools. This Flawless Finish brush set's high-quality bristles use silky soft fibres for perfect results. And made with artist-quality taklon they're cruelty free, like all products from the B. range. As Cassie explains, 'Using a good set of brushes is key to getting a professional looking make-up at home.'

B. Flawless Finish Brush Set, £20



PREPAND PREPARE
This bestselling anti-blemish primer is not only suitable for oily skin, but also contains blemish-fighting salicylic acid and soothing Aloe Vera. 'Applying a primer will help keep that party look

lasting all night,' Cassie explains.



B. Matte Lipstick, £7.99

'CHOOSING A MATTE TEXTURE GIVES A STRONGER LIP LINE WITH ULTIMATE HOLD'



B. Anti-blemish Primer, £9.99





B. Cleansing wipes, £3.99

SPOTLESS SKIN

If you're prone to sensitive skin, try working these micellar cleansing wipes into your beauty routine. Not only will they cleanse, tone, refresh and soothe your skin, but they also contain effective micellar technology, which captures pesky dirt and impurities. Cassie's verdict? 'If you need a quick cleanse there is no better way to freshen up the skin than with a micellar wipe. These are both hydrating and thick, so give the ultimate luxury feel.'



IN A FLASH

Make-up artist Cassie Lomas thinks that this sculpted blush and highlighter set is a

festive season essential. Why? 'It can give you a youthful, radiant glow and flush of colour with just one swift slick across the cheeks,' she

explains. Simply pat lightly to blend onto your skin and the easy-to-use dual blush and highlighter (in one) will do the rest of the work for you. Looking for film-star glow? Or simply to add a final flourish to your party look this Christmas? This is the product you need in your beauty cupboard.

B. Sculpted Blush & Highlighter Set, £10.99



All B. products are suitable for Vegans and are Cruelty Free. Please visit Superdrug. com for more information.





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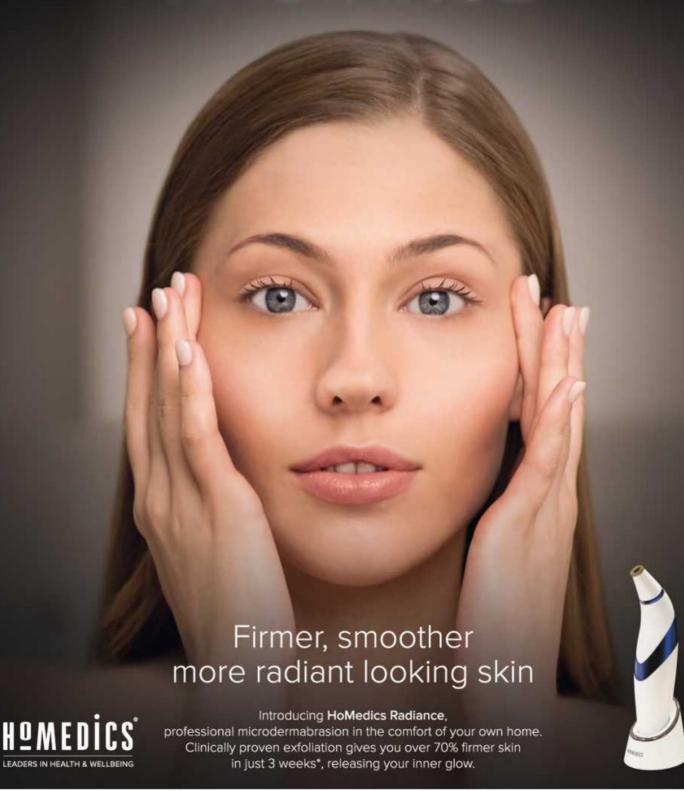
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RADIANCE













TEO VAN DEN BROEKE, STYLE DIRECTOR, ESQUIRE

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Your skin SALVATION

Want to give your body (and mind) a little TLC? For beautifully soft skin, all day long, try the groundbreaking new Dove DermaSpa range.

t's important to carve out a little pampering time in your daily routine - to look after you, and your skin. How? By taking some extra moments to moisturise and give your skin the care and attention it deserves. Not only will this improve your skin's condition, but it also gives you some much needed, relaxing time to yourself – a little piece of calm, every day. Plus, moisturising is a good way to de-stress. So, if you're worried that your skin care regime is stuck in a rut, why not revitalise it with the new Dove DermaSpa range?

Dove has created its most scientifically advanced body care range ever. Dove DermaSpa combines the best of both worlds – the best spa formulations with the latest advancements in dermatological care so you can get great results for both body and mind.

With fragrant ingredients (from patchouli to coconut) and advanced Cell MoisturisersTM, the range is bound to reenergise your routine, your skin, and make you feel good inside and out!

EXPERT ADVICE

When it comes to skin care, it's important to trust the experts. The secret behind the Dove DermaSpa range lies in its industry leading



technology, which has resulted from over 10 years of skin care research, and the knowledge of 280 trusted scientists. It is also the only skin care range to harness technology which was originally developed for premium face care.

INVOLVED IN
SOMETHING THAT IS
GOING TO HELP MAKE
DOVE EVEN MORE OF
A BEAUTY LINE



REGAIN YOUR RADIANCE

Whatever your skin type, Dove DermaSpa has the product to suit you. From Goodness3 (for luminous, velvety soft skin) to Uplifted+ (a deep penetrating treatment for firmer skin). Intensive hand treatment, or Summer Revived (the first spa-like lotion combining gentle tanners and Cell Moisturisers[™]), it has everything you need to revitalise your skin. The results? Replenished skin that looks - and feels silky, soft and beautiful.



'A MODERN, CREAMY FRAGRANCE THAT ALERTS YOU TO THE FACT THAT THIS IS A PRODUCT RANGE ABOUT CARING'



BEAUTY SECRETS

From luxurious oils to velvety lotions, the Dove DermaSpa products are the best way to get in touch with your body - and yourself. The indulgent, spa-like formula will help you to unwind, refresh, and feel like the best version of you, whilst the superior technology makes your skin more healthy looking. And, because every product is infused with subtle scents, it's never been easier to indulge in a spa-like experience in the comfort of your own home. Bliss.

The verdict



Who better to create heavenly smelling body

lotions than Ann Gottlieb, one of the world's leading fragrance experts? The good news is that she has collaborated with Dove to inject this new range of luxurious sensorial products with unique and refreshing scents.

ANN'S OPINION?

'Due to its link with the limbic system, fragrance always creates a connection with your heart more than your brain – there isn't a brand I know of with which that is more true than Dove.'



Want to find out more about the Dove DermaSpa body lotion, oil, cream and hand lotion? Pop into Superdrug, Boots or ASDA this month to try the products for yourself, or visit Dove.co.uk for more information and tweet @DoveUK #DoveDermaSpa to share your opinions







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TACKLE ANY BEAUTYSOS

Don't let scaly shins, 4pm complexions or the lure of your sofa stop you having a blast this season. Here, the best pre-party fixes for body and mind* (*champagne not included)

Words KIM PARKER

'Liquid concealers can highlight spots, so I find it best to buff a tiny amount of mineral powder directly on top with a small make-up brush,' says make-up artist Arabella Preston, who rates RMS Beauty Un-powder (£28; left). 'The brush removes flakes, while the powder conceals without caking or looking obvious.'

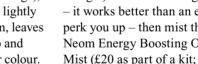
Wake up your eyes

whole face looks brighter. Preston says. 'Start by removing any smudges and flakes with a moisturiser-dipped cotton bud from Muji (£2.50 for 200; below). They get right under your lower lashes and don't leave fluff behind. Firmly press NARS Radiant Creamy Concealer (£22; left) into the inner corners of eyes, beneath your irises and on the very outer corners; finish by brushing brows upwards for lift and adding a lick of mascara.'

FIGHT THE FLAKES

Dry lips and lipsticks don't mix, especially not matte lipsticks, which look so good this season. Keep one of Clinique's Sweet Pots (£15 each; below) to hand. One half contains a sugar scrub you can actually eat off afterwards (making it

ideal for on-the-go); the other, a lightly tinted balm, leaves lips plump and primed for colour.



A-game to the dance floor.

RESCUE FLAT HAIR

If you're in a hurry, forget trying to add more product to compensate for lack of oomph - it often makes hair look worse. 'Instead, pull it back into a Jenna Lyons-style bun - one in line with the tops of your ears looks most modern,' says hairstylist James Galvin. 'It's the best emergency up-do because it won't compete with your outfit and it makes your cheekbones look amazing.' >>

3 Turn around your mood

Feel like staying in with Netflix instead of going out? Mix one sachet of Emergen-C Energy Release & Immunity Support (£4.99 for a pack of eight) with water and glug it down - it works better than an espresso to perk you up – then mist the air with Neom Energy Boosting On The Go Mist (£20 as part of a kit; right) and deeply inhale. Its citrus essential oils help sharpen focus and lift spirits. In other words, they'll bring your







Rimmel London Glitter Bomb Top Coat in Disco Diva, £3.99

SAVE A CHIPPED NAIL

'One layer of glittery top coat hides chips and revitalises shine. Plus, it dries faster than other top coats, so it's great for emergencies,' says nail expert Adam Slee. Get your face back

By 4pm skin starts to look ruddy and slack. Patting on some moisturiser and refreshing your eyes can help, but if your end-of-day face needs more intensive care, try this: massage a dab of This Works Light Time Cleanse & Glow (£30; top right) into skin, then remove with a warm flannel. Next, smooth on a sachet of Roloxin Lift Instant Skin Smoothing Masque (£79 for a pack of 10; right) and relax for 10 minutes. This mask has a cult-like following in the US for its instant lifting effects. Now, mix two drops of Hylamide Photography Foundation (£18; bottom right) with a moisturiser to hide pores and boost luminosity.

SKIN SMOOTHING

BUFF YOUR BODY

Cocktail-dress-ready skin comes courtesy of these insider tricks to banish scales and bumps. 'To fast-track smoother, more tonedlooking legs you've got to start in the shower,' says Nichola Joss, skincare expert for Sanctuary Spa. 'Use an exfoliating mitt to massage legs with circular movements, working upwards from ankles to hips to drain puffiness and banish dry skin. Then splash with cold water, dry off and apply Sanctuary Spa's Tight & Tone Body Serum (£12), which sinks in quickly to firm and improve skin texture.' To finish, lightly buff Claudia Winkleman for M&S Shine On Face & Body Illuminator (£12.50; above) along shins and front of thighs to make them look lean, smooth and glowy.

Make a stash
Keep these items to hand and you'll always

be able to create a look, even when your make-up bag's at home... Spritz a little Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream All-Over Miracle Oil (£29; right) on fingertips, then use to add highlights, glow and sheen where needed (hair, face, body...). Bobbi Brown Rich Lip Colour in Crimson (£20; top right) adds instant glamour and looks like a healthy, natural flush when dabbed on cheeks, too. Use NARS Velvet Shadow Stick in Oaxaca (£20; far right) to line eyes or blend out for a quick metallic smoky. Finally, Dior Fix-It 2-In-1 Prime & Conceal (£23.50; bottom right) is your onestop for smoothed, evened-out skin.



REFRESH DARK ROOTS

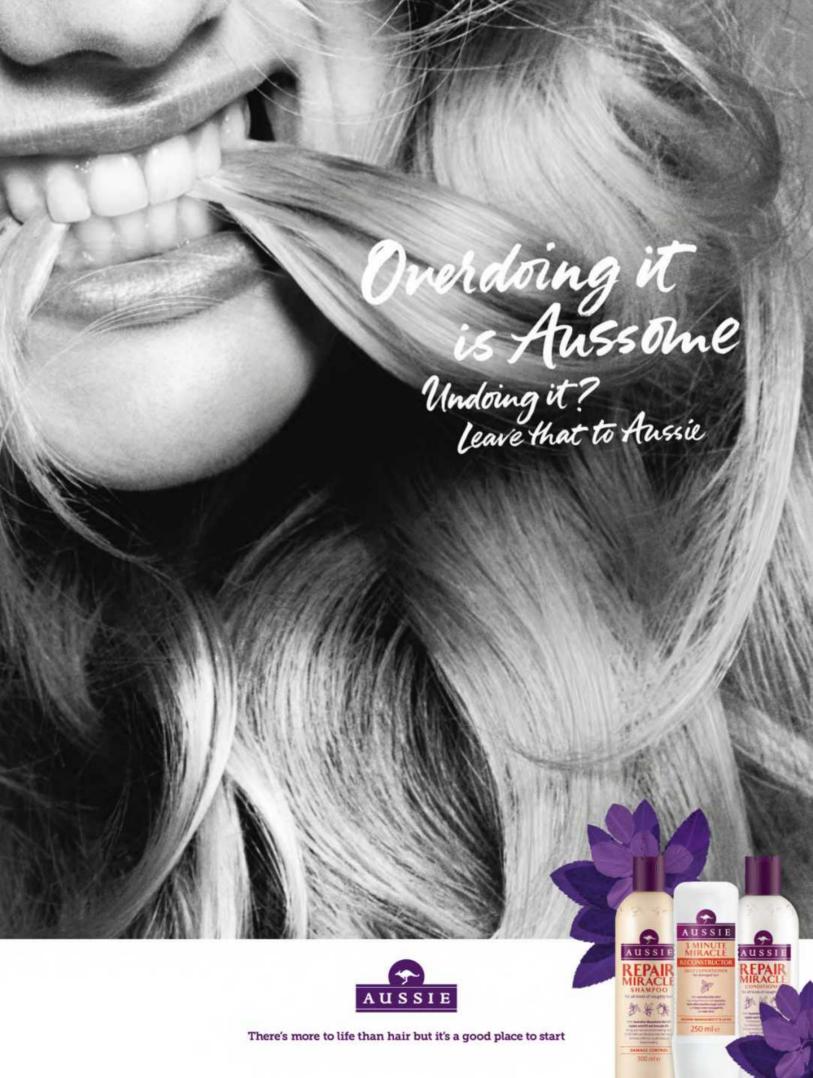
'Clean hair's very forgiving, but the minute hair in need of a colour gets even slightly greasy, it just looks grungy,' says top colourist Josh Wood. Spritz his new Root Concealers in Light Blonde, Light Brown or Dark Brown (£12.50

each; left) along your parting or wherever hair's grey, wait a few seconds, brush through and go. The mattifying polymers in the spray absorb oil, as the pigment touches out regrowth.

Discover more of the Red team's party beauty tricks at REDONLINE.CO.UK

WOOD WOOD

9





Splashes of red, gold

resist. I'll be painting

on Dolce & Gabbana

The Nail Lacquer in

(from top) Antique Gold, Dora and Glow

Keep calm and ...

... decant a few drops of

De Mamiel's Altitude

Oil (£26) on to your

palms, rub them in and

inhale deeply. Right,

now you're ready to

carry on with Christmas.

Light (£20 each) with abandon.

and shimmer for

Christmas? I can't

BOBBI BROWN'S AFRICA-INSPIRED EYESHADOWS ARE AS PRETTY ON LIDS AS IN THE PALETTE.

FROMTOP: Seguin Eye Shadows in Star Beam and Moon Rock, £25 each

BEAUTY

WINTER **WONDERS X 2**

EXFOLK

'Tis the season of dry hands and, though it might sound excessive, I've found my hand cream really does sink in much better after I've used a scrub. Try Molton Brown's excellent Alba White Truffle Hand Exfoliator (£14; right).

Need a your-lips-but-better gloss to pair with this season's kohled party eyes? MAC Patent Polish Lip Pencil in Innocent (£17.50; above) is an effortless nude that has just enough rosiness and sheen to look pretty, not flat.





'Mix your

with a drop or two of liquid highlighter for a more luminous to skin with a cotton bud so you get a light, even distribution.'

foundation effect, and dot the mixture on Saem Mool Jung, top Korean make-up artist

OF THE BEST... Stockina

SWEET: **Ari** by Ariana Grande EDP. £23 for 30ml at Boots

SPARKLY: Nails Inc Nail Polish in Snowglobe, £15

STYLISH: Grosgrain bow, £5, ilovegorgeous

> Find more great beauty stocking fillers at REDONLINE.CO.UK

BEAUTY INSIDER

– by ANNABEL MEGGESON

My business-savvy boyfriend tipped me off months ago that CHINESE

SKINCARE WAS GOING TO BE THE NEXT **BIG THING** – and he may well have been right. In Paris, where it's already a hit with the locals (and FRENCH WOMEN KNOW A THING ABOUT **SKINCARE**, trust me), Herborist has opened a new store. And now, the China-based brand, which incorporates elements of traditional Chinese medicine, is launching in the UK. THE CULT ITEM is the T'ai Chi Mask, apparently, but I'm head over heels for the All-Day Invigorating & Moisturizing Cream (£24). It's LIGHT, BUT LUXE-Y AND **SUPREMELY HYDRATING.** I love the distinct, clean smell, too. (Find them both at feelunique.com.) While we're on a skincare tip, I've added Sarah Chapman's new Liquid Facial Resurfacer (£36)

to my routine. It's a gentle chemical exfoliator that suits all skin types and can be swiped on (pre-creams) every day to boost radiance. **EAST MEETS WEST** with

beautiful results. 2

This month I have been... **USING** lashings of Tresemmé Oleo Radiance Illuminates Conditioning Mist (£6.99); LOVING Aromatherapy Associates Clear Mind Bath Oil (£48), even more now it's in Liberty-print packaging; PLANNING my winter look pale skin and a dark bob

204 REDONLINE.CO.UK DECEMBER 2015

Ssssssshhhhhh!

Keep it down.

There's an **Aussie girl** nearby who's been burning both ends of several candles.

You'll easily spot her. A bit sleep deprived.

But with hair that's wide-awake

and as fresh as a field of well-rested daisies.

How's that even possible? Aussie's

Repair Miracle collection, that's how.

Even if you've been up

to the unmentionable (we won't ask),

these **hair-rehab** miracles,

will sort out your do in no time.

So go on. Find Your Aussome.

It's what all the best **Aussie girls** do.

#FindYour Aussome





Give from THE HEART

Sentiment, emotion, meaning – presents are about more than just stuff. Give the gift of me-time this Christmas with the Rituals collection





ow has this year been for you? Busy? For most of us it's more hectic than ever, juggling work, family and social life. So Christmas becomes a time to slow down, to spend time with loved ones and carry on long-standing traditions, showing your friends and family how much you care.

Rituals believe that happiness can be found in the smallest of things. Inspired by ancient Eastern traditions and with fragrances created by the world's finest perfumers, Rituals products transform everyday routines into meaningful moments. Everyone needs 'me-time' and to look after

'I love that the
Ayurveda body
cream infused with
Indian rose & Himalaya
honey soaks easily
into my skin'
DEBORAH BRETT,
RED CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

themselves, and there is a quiet luxury in all Rituals products, bringing a touch of happiness and a moment of peace to the hectic pace of daily life.

This makes the Rituals collection the perfect gift. Giving is less about stuff but more about sentiment, because when we give from the heart the joy of giving becomes its own reward. Sentiment, emotion, meaning – all of which Rituals products are bursting with. Doing small things for other people is a way to show they mean something to you, that they are your Christmas heroes. Who do you want to give a moment of peace, joy and true happiness to?

Go in store or visit rituals.com to find your perfect gift this Christmas, with the chance to create your own bespoke gift guaranteed to make your loved ones happy. After all, giving from the heart, providing people with the means to savour the moment, is the true meaning of Christmas.



WHO IS YOUR CHRISTMAS HERO?

Who is the person you want to give back to? Nominate your Christmas hero before November 30th at redonline.co.uk/rituals and be in with a chance to win the Ayurveda Extra Large Gift Set from Rituals* worth £55.00 for you and your hero.



Whatever tickles your fancy.

A classic look? A sprinkling of mid century? Or perhaps a splash of contemporary? Whatever sofa you're looking for, with our wide range of styles you'll find it. Oh, and if you order before the 23rd November we'll deliver in time for Christmas. Fancy that.

do re mi sofa.com

Edited by PIP McCORMAC



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Magically AND FULL OF SLIGHT

Twinkle, twinkle and burning bright, Christmas is for sparkle, and plenty of it. Our new decorating rules will have you reaching for the stars

Styling SARAHKEADY Photographs POLLY WREFORD

ON BANISTER, FROM TOP: Flowers and foliage (throughout), from a selection, Scarlet & Violet. Fairy lights, £8.99 for 3.2m, Lights4fun.
Glass baubles, from £3 each, all Marks & Spencer.
ON STAIRS, FROM TOP: Glass vase, £18, LSA.
Tree in glass dome, £12, Marks & Spencer. Jam jars, stylist's own. Gold spray paint (on jam jars), £7.49, PlastiKote. Tealights, £7 for a pack of 30, Shearer Candles. Pink glass bauble, £10 for a pack of two, Habitat. Glass bonbon jar, £35, LSA. Small gold baubles (in jar), £7 for a set of 12, Gisela Graham. Assorted glass baubles (in jar), from a selection, Marks & Spencer.
Striped glass tealight holder, £12.50, LSA.
Blue and gold glass bauble, £6, Marks & Spencer.

Tall glass tealight holder, £15 for a set of three, Ikea. Resin stag, £12, Marks & Spencer. Small glass tealight holder, £1 for a set of four, Ikea. Glass dish, £46 for a set of four, LSA. Turquoise plastic bauble, £3, Marks & Spencer. ON FLOOR, FROM LEFT: Glass dish, £30, LSA. Pink glass bauble (in dish), £10 for a pack of two; gold plastic bauble (in dish), £3, both Marks & Spencer. Tall tealight holder, as before. Large glass dish, £28, LSA. Small gold baubles (in dish), as before. Assorted glass baubles (in dish), from a selection, Marks & Spencer. Glitter stag, £25, Marks & Spencer. Tinsel trimming (used to decorate stag), £22.95 per metre, VV Rouleaux. Jam jars; spray paint; tealight holder, all as before







CLOCKWISE, FROM BOTTOM LEFT: Copper-coated stainless steel tray, £130 for a set of five, Tom Dixon. Bowl (on tray), stylist's own. Cotton and card arrow, £4.50, RE. Metal leaf dish, £7.99, H&M. Glass cake stand, £25; glass sundae dish, £8.95, both Summerill & Bishop. Ceramic votive, £29.99, Zara Home. Tealight, £7 for a pack of 30, Shearer Candles. Mini apple candle, £90 for a set of four, DL & Co at Selfridges. Metal tray, £14.99, H&M. ON TRAY, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP: Glitter plastic baubles, £5 for a pack of 12, Marks & Spencer.

Brass bowl, £125 for a set of six, OKA. Mini glass baubles, £10 for a set of 100, Paperchase. **Metal bowl**, £7.99, H&M. Large glass bauble, £5, Marks & Spencer. Copper cake mould, £5.99 for a set of two, Pipii. Small brass bowls, £65 for a set of five, Tom Dixon at Selfridges. Stainless steel coffee spoons, £56 for a set of six, Canvas Home at Selfridges. Plastic confetti gems, £2.75 for around 100, Paperchase. Metallic spray paint (on gems), £7.49, PlastiKote. Gold glitter, £3 for a pack of four shakers, Paperchase. Linen table cloth, £80, The Linen Works >>



Oak and linen dining chairs, £499 for two; oak dining table, £899, all Marks & Spencer. Lacquered beech dining chairs, £75 each, Habitat. Cardboard star (on chair), £15, Marks & Spencer. ON TABLE, FROM LEFT: Linen table cloth, £80, The Linen Works. Blue glass tumblers, £28 for a set of six, OKA. Marble cake stand, £55, Oliver Bonas. Glass cloche (on top), £25, Marks & Spencer. Porcelain dinner plates, £26 each; side plates, £17.95 each; bowls, £15.50 each, all Canvas Home at Selfridges. Linen napkins, £7.50 each, Designers Guild. Glass sundae dishes, £8.95 each; wine glasses, £11.95 each; small porcelain bowl (comes with spoon), £42.50; glass jug, £205, all Summerill & Bishop. Glass vase, £18, Habitat. Gold foliage (in vase), £5, Marks & Spencer. Silver birch

branch (in vase), £19.95 per stem, Parlane. Scented candle, £62, Cire Trudon. IN DISHES, FROM LEFT: Gold chocolates, £13.50 for a 115g box, Charbonnel & Walker. Orange chocolate coins, £3.99 for a 109g bag, Selfridges. Chocolate pearls, £24 for a 200g box, Artisan du Chocolat. Gold chocolate cubes, £9.50 for a 100g bag, Godiva Chocolatier. HANGING PAPER DECORATIONS, FROM LEFT: Peach, £12.50 for three, Oliver Bonas. Snowflake lantern, £8, Marks & Spencer. Copper spray paint (on lantern), £8.83, PlastiKote. Orange, £1.50; red, £7.50, both RE. Large star, £15, Laura Ashley. Turquoise, £8; orange, as before, both RE. Small star, £12, Talking Tables. Blue, £2.75, Pipii. Satin ribbons (used to hang decorations), £2.50 for a 5m roll, Paperchase ≫





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FROM LEFT: Wood drinks cabinet, £599, Marks & Spencer. Glass and copper champagne flute; wine glass, both £7.50 each, both Oliver Bonas. Plastic confetti gems, £2.75 for around 100, Paperchase. Copper spray paint (on gems), £8.83, PlastiKote. **Brass bowl**, £95 for a set of five, Tom Dixon at Selfridges. Blue glass bauble, £4; pink glass bauble (just seen), £4.50; acrylic apple bauble. £20 for a set of six. all Gisela Graham at The Contemporary Home. Plastic and twig gold coated wreath, £39.50, Marks & Spencer. Metal and mirror-glass tray, £29.99, Zara Home. Brass and glass tumblers, £12.50 each; brass and glass carafe, £29, all Rockett St George. **Stainless steel cocktail shaker**, £35, Viski at Selfridges

For those very favourite baubles you don't want getting lost amongst the tree: a ribbon, hung high, becomes a festive installation

BAUBLES, FROM LEFT: Turquoise glass, £19.95 for a set of four, Liberty. Glass frog **prince**, £10, Designers Guild. Glass pine cone, £10, Heal's. Navy and gold sequin, £6, Marks & Spencer. Copper glass, £5.50, Gisela Graham at The Contemporary Home. Gold glitter glass, £3.99; green glass, £3.99, both Gisela Graham. Pink glass, £4.50, Gisela Graham at The Contemporary Home. Purple glitter glass acorn, £11.99

for a set of six, Gisela Graham. Glass penguins, £10, Rockett St George. Turquoise plastic, £3, Marks & Spencer. Pink and silver glass, £15; orange glass, £15, both The Conran Shop. **Satin ribbon** (used to hang baubles), £1.75 for a 3m roll, Paperchase 12

See our edit of the best Christmas decorations at REDONLINE.CO.UK

Stylist's assistants Holly Williamson, Rebecca Nee and Amy Webster. Off-Black Estate Emulsion paint (on wall, above), E38 for 2.5l, Farrow & Ball. Amethyst Starling Matt paint (on wall, right), E24.49 for 2.5l, Dulux. For stockist details, see the Directory





e all have our own unique take on this season's party trends, and thanks to membersonly website, BrandAlley, it's easy to get the look you covet.

Offering up to an incredible 70% off RRP in their exclusive online sales, members get access to some of the best designer brands at affordable prices — meaning you can add investment pieces to your wardrobe each season without the guilt.

So whether you're into tomboy tailoring and classic neutrals

or want to treat yourself to a party dress and statement items – BrandAlley's affordable prices mean you can create your own standout style.

Brands featured are Joseph, Jimmy Choo, Farhi by Nicole Farhi, Christian Louboutin, Carvella Kurt Geiger and 2 Love Tony Cohen.



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There's no need to compromise, you really can have it all with BrandAlley.co.uk – fashion's non-stop designer sale. Simply sign up for free to browse and shop all your favourite designer brands under one roof. From the red soles of Christian Louboutin shoes, to style-setting pieces from Saint Laurent, and staples from Converse, you'll be able to find the perfect look for every occasion. So what are you waiting for? Start shopping at BrandAlley.co.uk today.



statement mini









CHICKEN SHAWARMA

When I make this for friends I also include a garlic-yoghurt sauce, some sliced-up fresh tomatoes sprinkled with mint, and pickles. Or I just cut some cucumbers into wedges and macerate some red onions, cut into half-moons. with red-wine vinegar or lime.

SERVES 6-10 PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes, plus marinating time COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

- 12 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- Zest and juice of 2 unwaxed lemons
- 100ml olive oil
- 4 fat garlic cloves, peeled and finely grated or minced
- 2 dried or fresh bay leaves
- 2 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp dried chilli flakes
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- Lettuce leaves, to serve

For the shawarma sauce:

- 250g plain yoghurt
- 4 tbsp tahini
- 1 fat garlic clove, peeled and finely grated or minced
- 1 tbsp pomegranate seeds

1 Put the chicken thighs in a large resealable freezer bag. Using a fine microplane grater, grate in the lemon zest, then add the juice. Pour in the olive oil and add the garlic, then add all the remaining ingredients along with two teaspoons of sea-salt flakes. Squish everything about together, then seal the bag, place it on a plate or in a dish, and refrigerate for at least six hours, or up to one day. 2 When you're ready to cook, preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7, remove the chicken from the fridge and allow it to reach room temperature. Tip the contents of the freezer bag into a shallow roasting tin and make sure all the chicken thighs are lying flat and not on top of one another (if possible)

before roasting in the hot oven for 30 minutes, by which time they should be cooked through (though obviously you must check) and golden on top.

- **3** When the chicken is more or less cooked, make the sauce simply by combining the yoghurt with the tahini and garlic. Stir and add salt to taste, and sprinkle with the pomegranate seeds.
- 4 Line a platter with crisp lettuce, shredded or torn into pieces, then top with the piping-hot chicken, pouring the oily juices over them, unless you are, for some inexplicable reason, anti oily juices. If you wanted to make the chicken go further, you could cut the thighs into chunky slices rather than leaving them whole. And please do add any of the accompaniments suggested in my introduction.

WARM SPICED **CAULIFLOWER** AND CHICKPEA SALAD WITH POMEGRANATE SEEDS (right)

This is one of my favourite suppers, though there's no reason you can't serve it as a vegetable side. Don't feel bad about using chickpeas from a tin – I have been known to, myself.

SERVES: 2 as a main dish: 6 as a side PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

- 1 small cauliflower head
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 x 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1-2 tbsp harissa, to taste
- 4 smallish vine tomatoes
- 3-4 tbsp pomegranate seeds
- 100g flat-leaf parsley, to serve

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7. Trim the cauliflower and divide into small florets. Pour the oil



into a large bowl, add the cinnamon and cumin, and stir or whisk to help the spices disperse. Tip in the cauliflower and toss to coat. Pour the lot into a small oven tray and place in the oven for 15 minutes. Don't wash out the bowl just yet. **2** Add the chickpeas to the bowl with one tablespoon of the harissa, tasting it first to see if you want to add more, and toss to coat. Quarter and add the tomatoes, and shake or stir to mix. When the cauliflower has had its 15 minutes, remove from the oven, quickly tip the chickpeas and tomatoes over the top, and toss to combine before returning to the oven for a further 15 minutes, until the cauliflower is tender. **3** When it's ready, remove from the oven and sprinkle sea-salt flakes over the top, then add half the pomegranate seeds and toss to combine before dividing between two (or six) bowls. Divide the parsley leaves - without chopping them - between the bowls and toss to mix. Scatter with the remaining

pomegranate seeds to serve. >>



LAMB RIBS WITH NIGELLA AND CUMIN SEEDS

Lamb ribs, almost unknown over here, are one of the most delicious ways of eating lamb, and certainly the least expensive. Hard to track down, you'll need to find a compliant butcher and ask for them.

SERVES: 6-10 PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes

COOKING TIME: 1.5 hours

- 4 tsp nigella seeds
- 4 tsp cumin seeds
- 4 tsp regular olive oil
- 4 tbsp soy sauce
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and finely grated or minced
- 24 lamb ribs, cut from 3 lamb breasts, bones in
- **1** Preheat the oven to 150°C/gas mark 2. Line a large roasting tin with foil and sit a rack on top.
- 2 Add all the ingredients except the ribs to a dish and stir to combine. Dip the ribs, one by one, in the mixture so they are lightly coated on both sides. You may think this scant amount won't be enough for all the ribs, but it is just. You don't want them wet, merely coloured by the liquid and with some seeds adhering to them.

 3 Arrange the ribs on the prepared rack and cook in the oven for one
- **3** Arrange the ribs on the prepared rack and cook in the oven for one and a half to two hours (depending on the size of the ribs), or until the fat on the ribs is crisp and the meat tender. Arrange on a warmed platter and make sure you have a good supply of napkins to hand.

MIDDLE EASTERN MINESTRONE

This is in no sense an authentically Middle Eastern recipe but a fancy of mine, a vegetable soup imbued with the flavours of the Middle East. It is fragrant and filling, and fast becoming one of my favourites.

SERVES: 6 PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes COOKING TIME: 45 minutes

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 butternut squash (just under 1kg), peeled, deseeded and chopped into 2cm cubes
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and finely grated or minced
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tsp coriander seeds
- 2–3 preserved lemons (depending on size), finely chopped
- 1 x 400g can of chickpeas, drained
- 1.5 litres mild vegetable stock

- 100g bulgur wheat
- Chopped fresh coriander, to serve (optional)
- 1 Heat the oil in a heavy-based, lidded saucepan and sauté the onion, sprinkled with a little salt, for around three minutes, until softened. Add the squash, garlic, cumin and coriander and stir, letting everything cook for around 10 minutes.
- **2** Tip in the preserved lemons and chickpeas, then pour in the vegetable stock and partially cover with the lid to keep the liquid from evaporating too much. Simmer for around 20 minutes, by which time the squash should be just cooked.
- **3** Add the bulgur wheat, then re-cover the pan and cook gently for another 10 minutes, by which time the vegetables should be tender and the bulgur wheat soft but still nutty. Sprinkle with chopped coriander on serving, if so desired. ≫



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LEMON PAVLOVA

I'm something of a pavaholic, and am childishly excited about this one. I make this with shop-bought lemon curd, but feel free to make your own.

SERVES 8-12 PREPARATION TIME: 30 minutes COOKING TIME: 1 hour

- 6 egg whites (feel free to use egg whites from a carton, such as Two Chicks, if you wish)
- 375q caster sugar
- 2 1/2 tsp cornflour
- Zest and juice of 2 unwaxed lemons
- 50q flaked almonds
- 300ml double cream
- 1 x 325g jar lemon curd

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4 and line a baking tray with baking parchment. Beat the egg whites until satiny peaks form, then beat in the sugar, a spoonful at a time, until the merinque is stiff and shiny. Sprinkle over the cornflour, grate in the zest of one lemon and add two teaspoons of lemon juice. Fold gently until everything is thoroughly mixed. 2 Mound the mix on to the baking tray in a fat circle around 23cm in diameter, smoothing the sides and top with a knife. Place in the oven, then turn the temperature down to 150°C/ gas mark 2 and cook for one hour.

- **3** Remove from the oven and leave to cool at room temperature (if it is too cold, the pavlova will crack too quickly). When you're ready to eat, turn it on to a large, flat plate or board with the underside uppermost, so that the tender marshmallow belly of the pay melds with the soft topping.
- 4 Toast the almonds in a dry pan over a medium-high heat until they start to colour, shaking the pan at regular intervals so as not to let them burn. This won't take more than a minute or so. Remove them to a cold plate so they don't carry on cooking.
- 5 Whip the cream until thick and airv. and set aside. In a bowl, beat the lemon curd to loosen it a little. Add some lemon zest and a spritz of juice if it's too sweet. Spread the lemon curd on top of the merinaue base with a spatula. Top with the whipped cream, peaking it as if it were a merinque topping. Sprinkle with the zest of the remaining lemon and the toasted almonds, and serve.

HONEY PIE (page 221)

Now, you know I'm not one for mean portions, so believe me when I say you must cut this into modest slices. Partly because it's very intense, and partly because it's annoying if people don't finish, and you could have had some left for when they'd gone.

SERVES: 14 PREPARATION TIME: 25 minutes, plus freezing and cooling time COOKING TIME: 45-50 minutes For the pastry:

- 225g plain flour
- 125ml light and mild olive oil
- 60ml full-fat milk

For the pie filling:

- 100g soft unsalted butter
- 150g caster sugar
- 1 x 15ml tbsp fine polenta (not instant)
- 1 tsp vanilla paste or extract
- 175ml good runny honey
- 3 large eggs
- 150ml double cream
- 2 tsp cider vinegar

- 1 First, mix the flour, oil and milk with half a teaspoon of fine sea salt to form a rough, slightly damp dough. You can do this by hand or at low speed in a mixer. Tip out into a 23cm deep-sided, loose-bottomed flan tin and press patiently over the base and a little up the sides of the tin. I find a mixture of fingers, knuckles and the back of a spoon the easiest way to go. Put it into the freezer for at least one hour (I tend to do this the day before). 2 Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4 and pop in a baking sheet. Melt the butter in a saucepan. Take it off the heat and leave to stand for five minutes, then beat in the sugar. polenta, two teaspoons of sea-salt flakes and the vanilla paste or extract. Stir in the honey - oiling the bowl or jug you're measuring it in first - and beat in the eggs, followed by the cream and vinegar. **3** Take the pastry-lined tin out of
- the freezer and pour in the honey mixture, then place on the baking sheet in the oven for 45 to 50 minutes, turning it around after 30 minutes, at which time it will still seem very uncooked. When it's ready, it will be a burnished bronze on top, puffy at the edges and set in a soft, jellied way in the middle (it carries on setting as it cools). Remove to a wire rack, sprinkle with a quarter of a teaspoon of sea-salt flakes and leave to cool - this will take around two hours. I like it best when properly cold.
- **4** To unmould easily, sit the flan tin on top of a large jar or tin and let the ring part fall away, then transfer the liberated pie to a plate or board. I manage to get the pie off the flan base easily, but if you feel safer leaving it on, then do. Slice modestly and serve with clotted cream or crème fraîche. Recipes adapted from Simply Nigella: Feel Good Food by Nigella Lawson (Chatto & Windus, £26)

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Spicy crackling, sparkling puddings and lashings of flavour: this is how to bring some modern pizzazz to your Christmas table. It's celebration food, Ottolenghi-style – and it's just what we want to eat right now

Words MARINA O'LOUGHLIN Photographs JONATHAN GREGSON Prop styling TABITHA HAWKINS Food styling ANNIE RIGG

otam Ottolenghi is telling me that, up until the age of 13, he had little idea of what Christmas was: 'I had an image of stockings over the mantelpiece. And trees. But that was about it.' Just as I'm feeling a little teary about the young Ottolenghi, I realise he said '30', not '13'. Little wonder it has such significance for him now, aged 46.

We're sitting in his cool, supremely glamorous restaurant Nopi. While his Ottolenghis, a small group that have revolutionised lunch in the capital, are better known, this is where to come if you want to be dazzled. His achievements are legion: not only the restaurants, but his TV programmes that blend food and culture into an unmissable feast. And his books: the latest in a string of bestsellers is dedicated to this restaurant, and simply titled *Nopi*.

It's beautiful, with swoon-worthy photography and golden-edged pages. ('It's like a bible,' I say; Yotam laughs, 'Yes, that's what we're calling it.') An elegant man himself, aesthetics are clearly important to him. I've torn through the book longing to try the likes of tuna with coconut mochi cakes and have a simmering pot of Asian master stock always to hand. Of course, Ottolenghi is renowned (some might say notorious) for his ingredients lists. All kashk and Aleppo pepper, he has had a huge effect on the UK's palate – and its shopping baskets, influencing the likes of Waitrose to stock up on sumac and pomegranate molasses. He was at the forefront of the current culinary trend for celebrating vegetables. Fortunately for those bereft of a local purveyor of date syrup, dukkah or dulse, his eponymous online store supplies the finest examples.

As we talk, we eat many dishes, his trademark Middle Eastern food augmented by surprising Asian flavours: the Scully influence (Ramael Scully, Nopi's Malaysian-born head chef). There are crisp courgette fritters with manouri cheese and cardamom-scented yoghurt; scallops topped with

aniseedy, almost crunchy Chinese sausage – 'Scully and I love to wander through Chinatown being inspired.' There's the gooey baked blue-cheese cake (page 233); and twice-cooked chicken with kaffir lime salt and a fruity chilli sauce. All very Ottolenghi.

Christmas this year will be spent with his family – husband Karl Allen, son Max and new arrival, baby Flynn – and friends. 'There are usually about 20 of us round the table,' he says, 'often people I work beside, and the odd waif and stray. As an immigrant – and at the risk of sounding soppy – my colleagues have become my family.' He recommends goose as a turkey alternative, or a whole Asian-style seabass, or this fragrant pork belly (see page 230). But even he has the odd disaster: 'The whole suckling pig I cooked for Christmas last year not only failed to have a crisp crackling, the oven was too full so it steamed. And it also totally traumatised Max.' His recipe for a successful Christmas? 'Get people to arrive early to help,' he smiles. 'And add sherry or champagne.' A merry, delicious Christmas: the best possible kind. »



Yotam Ottolenghi's modern Christmas recipes are sure to impress

ROASTED PORK BELLY WITH CRUSHED BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND APPLE AND WALNUT SALSA

Ramael Scully, Nopi's head chef, learned the secret to really good crackling is rubbing half a lemon all over the pork skin, squeezing out the juice as you go, before sprinkling the salt over. It paves the way to crackled glory. Both the squash and the salsa are great as sides to other dishes: the squash goes with any roast bird or wine-braised shallots and the salsa is wonderfully happy spooned on top of any grilled oily fish.

SERVES: 4, generously PREPARATION TIME: 45 minutes COOKING TIME: 3 hours 30 minutes

For the pork belly:

- 20g thyme sprigs
- 12 large garlic cloves, skin left on, bruised with the flat side of a knife
- 4 lemongrass sticks, lightly bruised with a rolling pin
- 10cm fresh ginger, unpeeled, cut into 1cm slices
- 1.5kg pork belly, ribs intact and skin on
- 1 lemon, halved
- 60q coarse sea salt
- 500ml dry white wine

For the butternut squash:

- 1 large butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into 2cm chunks
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 30g unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 3 tbsp white miso paste

For the salsa:

- 1 Granny Smith apple, quartered, cored and cut into 1cm dice
- 70g walnuts, toasted and crushed
- 50g pickled walnuts, rinsed and cut into 1cm dice
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp yuzu juice (or lime juice)
- 1 tbsp mirin
- 10g tarragon, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp olive oil



1 Preheat the oven to 240°C/gas mark 9. Spread the thyme, garlic, lemongrass and ginger over the base of a high-sided roasting tray, measuring 32cm x 24cm. Lay the pork belly on top, skin-side up, and use kitchen paper to pat the meat dry. Rub the lemon all over the pork skin, squeezing the juice out as you rub. Set aside to dry for 10 minutes before sprinkling half the salt evenly all over the skin. Roast in the oven for one hour, until the crackling is semi-hard. The aromatics will be very crisp and charred at this point but this is normal. **2** Remove the pork from the oven. Scrape off and discard the salt. Spread the remaining salt evenly over the skin, then return to the oven.

Cook for another half an hour, until

the crackling is hard. Remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 190°C/gas mark 5. If a bubble has formed on the skin, insert a small knife and gently push it down to let the air out. Pour the wine into the roasting tray, taking care not to wet the sides or skin of the pork, followed by 400ml of water. Return to the oven and cook for another hour. Reduce the heat to 120°C/gas mark 1/2 and cook for a final hour. Remove and set aside to rest for 30 minutes.

3 While the pork is roasting for the last hour, prepare all the ingredients for the butternut squash and salsa, and as soon as the pork is out of the oven, increase the temperature to 220°C/gas mark 7. Mix the squash with the olive oil and spread it out on

a large baking tray. Roast in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes, until cooked. Transfer to a large bowl, add the butter and use a potato masher to crush the squash - but don't overmash it, as you want some texture - before stirring in the rice vinegar, miso, one teaspoon of salt and a grind of black pepper. Keep warm.

4 Mix together all the ingredients for the salsa in a bowl, along with half a teaspoon of salt and a grind of black pepper. Transfer the rested pork to a chopping board. Discard the herbs and brush off any excess salt from the skin, then use a large, serrated knife to slice the meat into rectangles, 3 to 4cm thick. If you want to remove the ribs before you slice the meat you can pull and twist them out, but otherwise you can slice between them and serve the meat on the ribs. **5** To serve, divide the warm crushed squash between the plates and

ROASTED CARROTS WITH CORIANDER SEEDS AND GARLIC

place a slice of pork on top. Spoon the salsa alongside and serve.

Honey, garlic, thyme and coriander: all exceedingly good accompaniments to roasted carrots.

SERVES: 4 PREPARATION TIME: 20 minutes COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

- 1kg carrots, peeled and sliced into 1/2cm x 8cm batons
- 1 tbsp runny honey
- 11/2 tbsp olive oil
- 11/2 tsp coriander seeds, crushed
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 5 thyme sprigs

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7. Put the carrots in a bowl with the honey, oil, coriander, garlic, one and a half teaspoons of coarse sea salt and plenty of black pepper. Mix, then transfer on to two baking paper-lined trays so the carrots aren't crowded. 2 Roast for 30 minutes until the carrots are caramelised but still



retain their bright colour, mixing through the thyme just three minutes before the end of cooking.

WILTED KALE WITH FRIED CHILLI AND GARLIC

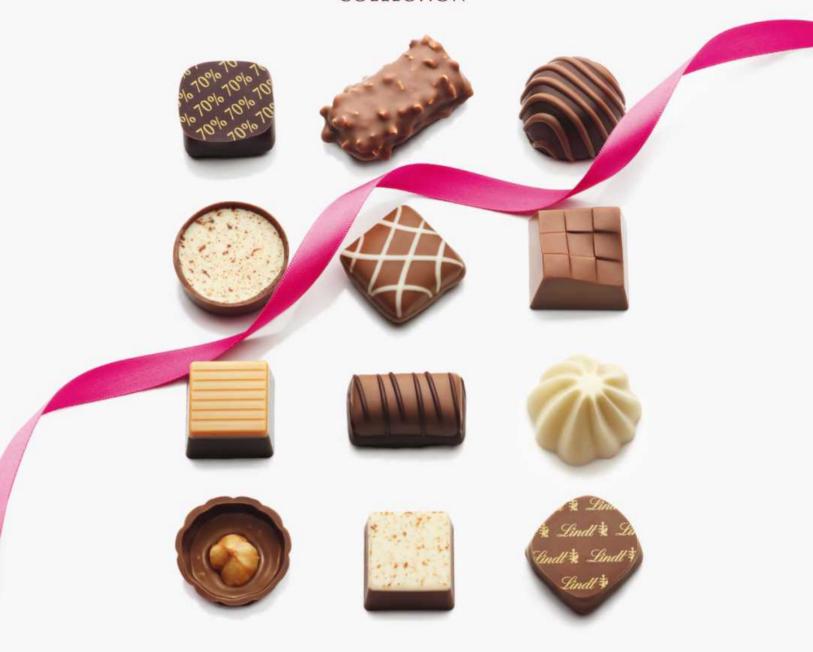
Wilted greens go perfectly with a number of fish and meat dishes, and the chilli and garlic turn the kale into something exceptional.

SERVES: 6 PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes COOKING TIME: 5 minutes

- 600g curly kale, tough stalks discarded, roughly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil

- 2 mild red chillies (deseeded if you don't want the heat), sliced into 3mm rounds
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 Place a saucepan on a high heat with plenty of salted water. Bring to the boil, add the kale and blanch for one minute. Drain well, pat dry with a clean tea towel and set aside.
- **2** Wipe the pan clean and return it to a medium-high heat with the oil, chillies and garlic. Fry for one to two minutes, then remove the pan from the heat. Use a slotted spoon to lift out the chilli and garlic and set them aside. Return the pan to the heat and add the kale and a pinch of salt. Stir for two minutes, then serve, with the chilli and garlic sprinkled on top. »





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Breathe Happy

- 1 medium leek, trimmed, white and green parts finely sliced
- 360g cream cheese
- 170q crème fraîche
- 80g double cream
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 20g chives, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp chopped basil
- 100g Stilton, roughly crumbled
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten

To serve:

- 40q runny honey
- 30g hazelnuts, toasted and lightly crushed
- 15q basil leaves

1 Place all the ingredients for the pickled beetroot in a medium. lidded saucepan and add one tablespoon of coarse sea salt. Pour over 800ml of water - all the beetroots should be submerged - and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 35 to 40 minutes, covered, until soft. Remove from the heat and set aside until completely cool. Lift out the beetroots, then peel and cut them into 1cm dice. Strain the pickling liquid, discard the bay, thyme and peppercorns, and return the liquid to a medium heat for around 25 minutes, until reduced by half and with around 600ml left in the pan. Set aside to cool, then pour the liquid over the beetroots. Keep in the fridge for 24 hours before using. 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Lightly grease eight 12cmwide ramekins (or soufflé tins) and place a circle of baking parchment in the base of each one. Place all the ingredients for the base in a food processor, with half a teaspoon of salt. Blitz well to form fine crumbs, then divide between the ramekins or tins, pressing down evenly and firmly. Set aside until ready to use. **3** Place the butter for the cheesecake in a small pan and add the leek. Cook on a medium heat for around seven minutes, stirring from time to time, until the leek is soft but still retains its colour. Set aside to cool, then transfer to a large mixing bowl with the cream cheese, crème fraîche, double cream,

garlic, chives, basil, half a teaspoon of salt and a grind of black pepper. Mix well to form a smooth paste before adding the cheese and eggs. Fold gently, then pour the mixture into the ramekins.

4 Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the mixture is cooked and a skewer inserted into the middle of one of the cakes comes out clean. Remove from the oven and serve at once. in the ramekins, with a drizzle of the honey and the nuts and basil sprinkled on top. The beetroot, strained, can be spooned on top of the cheesecakes, before garnishing, or served alongside.

CRUSHED NEW POTATOES WITH CAPER BERRIES. PINK PEPPERCORNS AND ROASTED GARLIC (right)

This is a side dish that really delivers on flavour. Caper berries are milder than the smaller caper bud, slightly lemony. They are widely available, but use regular capers if you need to.

SERVES: 4-6 PREPARATION TIME: 25 minutes COOKING TIME: 40-45 minutes

- 1 garlic head, cloves peeled
- 75ml olive oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 10g thyme sprigs
- 10g rosemary sprigs
- 1kg new potatoes, unpeeled
- 20g mint, whole stalks and leaves, plus 10g mint leaves, finely shredded
- 60g caper berries, stems removed and cut in half (or 60g regular capers, rinsed and left whole)
- 25g unsalted butter
- Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 20g parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tsp pink peppercorns, lightly crushed

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas mark 5. Place the garlic cloves in a small ovenproof frying pan or



baking tray with the olive oil, bay leaf, and half the thyme and rosemary. Roast in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes, basting the garlic once or twice during cooking. Remove from the oven and, once cool, strain the cooking oil into a large frying pan. The garlic needs to be set aside but discard the thyme and rosemary.

- **2** Place the potatoes in a large saucepan with the whole mint stalks and leaves and the remaining thyme and rosemary. Add one tablespoon of coarse sea salt, cover with water, bring to the boil and cook for 15 minutes. Drain, discard the mint, rosemary and thyme and cut the potatoes in half.
- **3** Place the pan with the oil on a high heat. Once hot, add the potatoes and fry for eight to nine minutes, stirring occasionally, until they start to break apart and are golden brown all over. Add the caper berries or capers, roasted garlic and butter. Cook for a further minute before adding the lemon zest and juice, parsley, remaining mint leaves, one and a half teaspoons of salt and the pink peppercorns. Stir gently together, cook for a final minute and serve. >>





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Some puddings – like some cocktails - will always be a bit 1980s, particularly where tropical fruit gets cooked. And none the worse for it, we say. This is a simple showstopper of a dessert. The home-made coconut ice cream in the Nopi book balances the sweetness and heat of the pineapple, or just use vanilla.

SERVES: 6 PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes COOKING TIME: 1 hour For the pineapple:

• 1 very large pineapple, peeled and halved lengthways, then cut into six long wedges, tough core removed

• 6 small Thai basil sprigs, to garnish (optional) For the spiced syrup:

90g caster sugar

- 16 whole cloves
- 1 large cinnamon stick, broken into quarters
- 1 large red chilli, deseeded and roughly chopped
- 1 vanilla pod, halved lengthways and seeds scraped
- 5cm piece of ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp tamarind paste

1 Preheat the oven to 240°C/gas mark 9. Place the ingredients for the syrup in a saucepan with 600ml of water on a medium-high heat. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer for five minutes.

2 Place the pineapple in a high-sided baking tray, 30cm x 22cm, then pour the syrup evenly over the top. Put it in the oven for 40 to 50 minutes, basting every 10 minutes until a knife goes into the pineapple without any resistance. Keep an eye on the liquid levels in the tray: you might need to add more water if they have dried out Remove from the oven and set aside to cool in the syrup for five minutes.

3 Remove the pineapple from the tray and drizzle each portion with one and a half teaspoons of syrup. Dot with a few cloves and cinnamon pieces from the syrup, garnish with Thai basil and serve with ice cream. 🛚 Nopi: The Cookbook by Yotam

Ottolenghi and Ramael Scully (Ebury Press, £28)

Find all of our favourite traditional Christmas recipes at REDONLINE.CO.UK



RESCUING the BLAND



Joanna Weinberg's simple recipe will guarantee you have the best-tasting bird this December 25th

f you're worried about cooking the perfect Christmas lunch, don't be. All it takes is some careful planning, and we've got some great ideas to help you out. This simple roast turkey recipe (which comes with its own nodryness promise) makes the ideal centrepiece for your meal, no messing about. And for more of your favourite Christmas classics (even sprouts that teenagers will want to eat), don't miss our effort-free festive dinner guide, all at Redonline.co.uk. Have a very merry festive day.

NO-TEARS CHRISTMAS TURKEY

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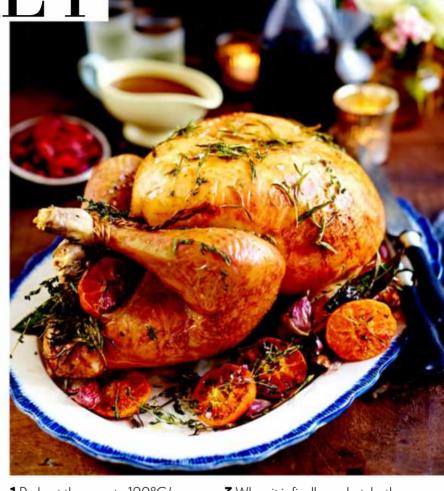
SERVES: 8 PREPARATION TIME: 20 minutes **COOKING TIME:**

Around 3 hours 30 minutes

- 1 large onion, peeled and sliced
- 5.5kg bronze free-range turkey
- 200g butter, softened

For the gravy:

- Turkey giblets
- A glass of red wine
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard



1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas mark 5. Lay the onion in a large roasting pan and place the turkey, on its side, on top. Slather all over with butter and seal with a double layer of foil around the tin, so that it cannot dry out. Put it into the centre of the oven. Allow a cooking time of 33 minutes per kilo up to 6.5kg, and 10 minutes per kilo thereafter. **2** Just before half time, turn the

turkey over, baste well and reseal under the foil canopy. Then, turn the oven up to 200°C/gas mark 6, to make sure the skin crisps up nicely.

3 When it is finally ready, take the bird out of the oven and allow it to rest for 20 minutes in a warm place on a carving board or tray. To make the gravy, place the roasting tray, with the onions still in it, over a flame, and add the giblets, a good splash of water and red wine, the mustard and plenty of salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, scraping up all the caramelly residue, and allow to reduce for five

minutes. Taste for seasoning, and strain into a juq. 🛭

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It's not too late to spread a little homemade festive joy. These pickles and preserves make sweet edible gifts and can be whipped up in minutes

Recipes MEREDITH KIRTON and MANDY SINCLAIR

APPLE AND SAGE CHUTNEY

This tangy relish has just a hint of Christmas spice about it the cinnamon is warming and welcoming. Perfect as an accompaniment to Boxing Day's cold meats and cheeses.

MAKES: 1 litre PREPARATION TIME: 20 minutes COOKING TIME: 20-25 minutes

- 2kg cooking apples, peeled, cored and cut into wedges
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
- 6 sage leaves
- 460g caster sugar
- 500ml apple-cider vinegar



1 Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes, until the apple is tender and the mixture has thickened slightly. **2** Ladle the hot chutney into warm,

sterilised jars and seal immediately. Store in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months. Refrigerate after opening.

RASPBERRY VINEGAR

Raspberry vinegar can be used in so many ways, such as to season ratatouille, bolognese and lentils, and also in salad dressings. It keeps for up to 12 months, so you can make a big batch well before you're ready to give it away.

MAKES: 500ml PREPARATION TIME: 25 minutes, plus resting time

- 125g raspberries
- 500ml white vinegar
- 115g superfine caster sugar

1 Lightly mash the raspberries in a glass container with a lid. Add the vinegar and mix well. Put the lid on, set aside for five days and stir daily.

2 Strain the vinegar through muslin into a saucepan. Add the sugar and stir over a low heat until dissolved. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat, pour into a warm, sterilised bottle and seal immediately. >>

Lucy didn't want a single thing for Christmas (She wanted a Spiralizer, Perfect Porridge Mug, Coffee Machine, Champagne Truffles...)



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RHUBARB AND LEMON COMPOTE

More full of fruit than traditional jams, compotes can be used as a topping for ice cream, pancakes, muesli or yoghurt. Try different fruit and flavour combinations – ginger, spices, basil, citrus zest and nuts all make interesting additions.

MAKES: 750ml PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes

COOKING TIME: 15 minutes

- 500g rhubarb, cut into 5cm lengths
- 1 lemon, zest peeled off in wide strips, juiced
- 140g soft brown sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks

1 Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil while stirring. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the rhubarb is soft.

2 Allow the mixture to cool, then store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Alternatively, ladle the hot compote into warm, sterilised jars and seal immediately, extending the shelf life to 12 months.



PRESERVED CHERRIES

These are so simple to make and just ever-so-slightly fragranced with the aromatics. They go well with yoghurt, or in a cocktail.

MAKES: 2 litres PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes COOKING TIME: 30 minutes

- 345g caster sugar
- 2 star anise
- 4 strips of orange zest
- 1kg cherries, stems and stones removed

1 Combine the sugar, star anise and orange zest in a large saucepan

with 500ml of water and place over a low heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil, then add the whole cherries. Allow the mixture to return to the boil, then remove from the heat. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the hot cherries to warm, sterilised jars. Pour over the syrup to cover and seal immediately.

2 Stand the jars on a wire rack or trivet in the base of a deep pot. Fill the pot with boiling water to cover the jars by at least 3cm. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove the jars from

the water and leave to cool on a wooden board. Store in a cool,

dark place for up to 12 months.

Refrigerate after opening. >>

PRESERVED LEMONS OR ORANGES

These gems are excellent for adding to casseroles, sauces, tagines and spice rubs, or simply for sprinkling over cooked fish. While preserved lemons are by far the most common, preserved oranges simply taste a little sweeter and less bitter.

MAKES: 2 x 500ml jars PREPARATION TIME:

10 minutes, plus resting time

- Sea-salt flakes
- 6 lemons or small oranges, quartered
- Bay leaves (optional)
- 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- Lemon or orange juice, to cover

1 Sprinkle some salt into your sterilised jars (use ones with plasticlined lids, as salt is corrosive to metal). Pack the lemon or orange wedges into the jar, flesh-side down, and sprinkle more salt over each layer, using one tablespoon of salt for every lemon or orange. Keep packing in wedges and sprinkling salt until the jar is full. Add bay leaves to lemons or a cinnamon stick to oranges. Press down on the fruit to extract juice. Add enough juice to cover, if needed. **2** Wipe the neck of the jar with a clean cloth and seal immediately. Store in a cool, dark place for two months before using. Refrigerate after opening.



PICKLED VANILLA PEACHES

These fruits glisten like jewels in a jar. Serve warm or at room temperature with roasted meat. Sweetly satisfying.

MAKES: 2 litres PREPARATION TIME: 15 minutes COOKING TIME: 10 minutes

- 2kg peaches (or nectarines)
- 460g caster sugar
- 500ml cider vinegar
- 3 vanilla beans, split lengthways and seeds scraped

1 Cut a shallow cross in the base of each peach then drop them into

a pot of simmering water for two minutes. Drain and transfer to a large bowl of iced water to cool. Peel, halve and stone the peaches and put into warm, sterilised jars.

2 Combine the sugar, vinegar, vanilla beans and seeds in a pan. Heat gently, stirring until the sugar dissolves, then bring to the boil. Cook for 10 minutes, until syrupy. Ladle the hot syrup over the peaches to cover and seal immediately. Store in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months. Refrigerate after opening. ▶ Recipes taken from The Produce

Companion by Meredith Kirton and Mandy Sinclair (Hardie Grant, £20)

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8

Style tip For stacks of presents, use clashing paper patterns before customising your gift tags to give them all-important personality



Style tip
Don't feel confined to using
just one ribbon. Layer in
different shades and textures
for that artistic flourish

1 Top present: Wrapping paper, £8 per sheet, Paper Haveli. Wood gift tag, £3.50, Happywrap at Etsy. Red Velvet matt emulsion (on gift tag), £39 for 2.5l, Designers Guild. Satin ribbon, £1 for 20m, Paperchase. Bottom present: Wrapping paper, £1.95 per sheet, PaperTreeSupplies at Etsy. Gold satin ribbon, £3.25 per m, VV Rouleaux. Blue satin ribbon, 70p per m, Berisfords. Grey velvet ribbon, £2.95 for 3m, Pipii 2 Wrapping paper, £5.25 per sheet, Selfridges. Glass mini baubles, £5.50 for 20; satin ribbon, £9.50 for 20m; foil gift tag, £5.50 for 15, all Cox & Cox. Craft paper (used to

decorate gift tag), £1.70, per sheet, Hobbycraft 3 Wrapping paper, £2.50 per sheet, Paperchase. Velvet ribbon, £4.50 for 5m, John Lewis. Papier-mâché star, £26 for six, Paper Haveli 4 Wrapping paper, £10.50 for five sheets, Paper Haveli. Wired satin ribbon, £3.75 per m, VV Rouleaux 5 Wrapping paper, £12.50 per sheet, Cox & Cox. Red wired polyester ribbon, £8.99 for 10m, Jane Means at Notonthehighstreet. Gold poly-mix ribbon, £1.95 for 2m, Sophia Victoria Joy. Navy satin ribbon; gold elastic, both 70p per m, both Berisfords. Foil gift tag, £5.50 for 15, Cox & Cox »

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1 Wrapping paper, £3 for 2m; satin ribbon, £1 for 20m, both Paperchase. Vinyl and plastic 'Merry Christmas' washi tape, £3.50 for 25m, Cox & Cox. Chevron washi tape, £2 for 10m; polka-dot masking tape, £2 for 10m, both UnwrapColour at Etsy. Polka-dot and stripe tape, £2.95 for four rolls, Fox & Star. Striped washi tape, £1.50 for 10m, FredAndBo at Etsy 2 Wrapping paper, £4.40 for three sheets, Sophia Victoria Joy at Notonthehighstreet. Twine, £8 for four rolls, Paperchase. Paper honeycomb ball, £2.75, Pipii. Glass mini baubles, £4 for 25, Paperchase. Polyester

pompom, £2, George **3** Recycled wrapping paper, £4.75 for two sheets, Katie Leamon at Notonthehighstreet. **Glass bauble**, £10 for two, Habitat. **Pink metal decoration**, £8 for four; **curling ribbon**, £1 for 20m, both Paperchase **4** Wrapping paper, £1.25 per sheet, Paperchase. **Cotton ribbon**, £5 for 5m, Paperchase. **Card gift tag**, £3.95 for five, Sophia Victoria Joy at Notonthehighstreet **5** Paper **gift bag**, 75p, Little Baby Company at Notonthehighstreet. **Twine** (comes with craft paper), £5.75, Alfies Studio at Notonthehighstreet. **Card gift tag**, £1.50 for 10, Paperchase »



Festive skin saviours

It's party season, but as alcohol takes its toll on our skin, we need to have some great products on standby, as Cherry Menlove reveals

We all love Christmas and busy blogger and mum of twins Cherry Menlove is no exception. Like so many of us. Cherry finds that between hosting and attending parties over the festive season, her alcohol intake goes up. 'I love champagne, but alcohol has the fastest and most dramatic effect on my skin. My face becomes puffy and the next morning it looks like it's been

Cleansing Water as I can even use it in bed if things get really late! It effectively removes make-up and instantly hydrates my skin which is great, as alcohol can really dry it out. The Kind To Skin Micellar Cleansing Wipes are super easy, too, for when I'm really tired. I'll then use Simple Kind To Skin Vital Vitamin Night Cream which replenishes and restores my skin. It

'Avoid skin sensitivity caused by excess alcohol. Have a glass of water with every alcoholic drink and use a good night repair cream such as Simple Kind to Skin Vital Vitamin Night Cream'

CHERRY MENLOVE, BLOGGER

through the wars! It'll be grey and blotchy – and I sometimes even get spots.'

However, Cherry notes, 'It's not all doom. It helps to drink plenty of water alongside alcohol. So does taking off my make-up before bed. I love Simple Kind To Skin Micellar keeps it hydrated and prevents morning-after face! Once a week, I'll use a Simple Kind To Skin Deep Cleansing Facial Mask, which detoxifies my skin, followed by the night cream. It helps keep my complexion glowing, even after partying!'



SEASON SURVIVAL

Simple Kind To Skin Micellar Cleansing Water gently yet effectively cleanses skin in one simple step, making it ideal if you've had a late night. Kind To Skin Vital Vitamin Night Cream is enriched with multiple vitamins and helps keep your skin nourished and replenished. Kind To Skin Deep Cleansing Facial Mask helps draw out dirt and impurities to clean and brighten skin.

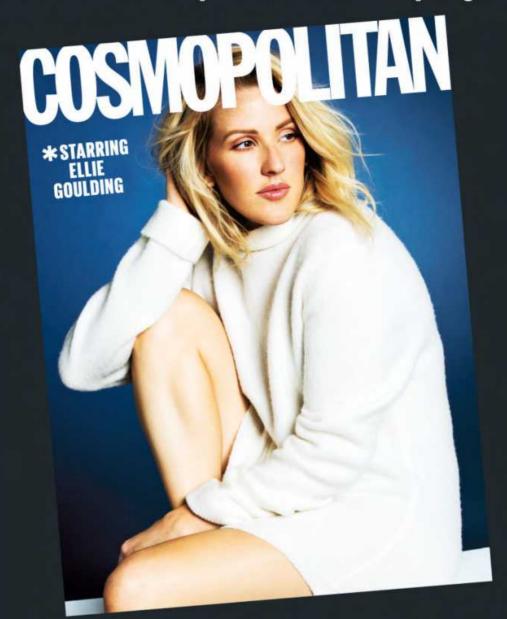


WIN EXCLUSIVE SKIN-LOVING PRODUCTS

For simple solutions on how to achieve healthy, instantly hydrated skin, head to **simpleskinadvice.com** and take the quiz. In return, you'll receive a personalised skin map and a beauty video from Cherry. You can also enter online for a chance to win* your own Simple hydration pack to instantly hydrate skin.



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NEW-LOOK COSMOPOLITAN SHARPER. SMARTER. BOLDER.

December issue (25) On sale 3 November

Edited by SASKA GRAVILLE



rent it. At £20,000 for five bedrooms (sleeping 10 people) for seven nights, it's not cheap, but I've been on enough overpriced ski trips to know that £2,000 each for a week's full board in glorious surrounds isn't OTT. Expensive? Yes. Value for money? I think so.

First impressions of Haus Alpina come after exiting the lift from the underground garage, into a hallway leading to two enormous living rooms. Soft cushions are piled invitingly high on the sofas, luxurious art books sit alongside vases of fresh blooms on the coffee tables and candles adorn every surface. It's a White Company wonderland.

I'm handed a glass of champagne by Tracy, who, along with husband Jimmy, is my host. The couple also look after Chrissie when she holidays here and, if you rent Haus Alpina, you'll get to enjoy their hospitality, too.

This may be mountain luxury, but it also feels like a home. You can sink into the sofas without worrying you're making the place untidy, light as many candles as you want and ask for a cup of English Breakfast if that's what you fancy. As for Jimmy's food? Ottolenghi-inspired dinners, and hearty breakfasts to send you off to the slopes full of energy.

For experienced skiers, Klosters is well-known for its amazing off-piste, but I'm more of an on-piste skier so take full advantage of the blues and reds in the Parsenn and Madrisa ski areas. The beautiful tree-lined runs are mesmerising – especially with a Schoggi mit Rahm (hot chocolate

A warming hot

chocolate with

rum; the interiors

EAT SKI LOVE

with rum) at Berghaus Erika, Schlappin, when you get to the bottom (schlappin.ch).

For non-skiers, there are horse-drawn carriage rides through the town (pferdekutschen.ch) or skating at the local ice rink (sportzentrum-klosters.ch).

Back at Haus Alpina, I'm lucky enough to have the penthouse bedroom – Chrissie's room when she stays. You don't need me to tell you that it's a cream and white paradise, with accents of soft grey and a bed I melt into. In the giant bathroom, toiletries from The White Company are laid out ready to use: Jasmine, Rose and Neroli Shower Gel; White Lavender Body Lotion for afterwards. As I said, ruined for any other chalet, ever. *

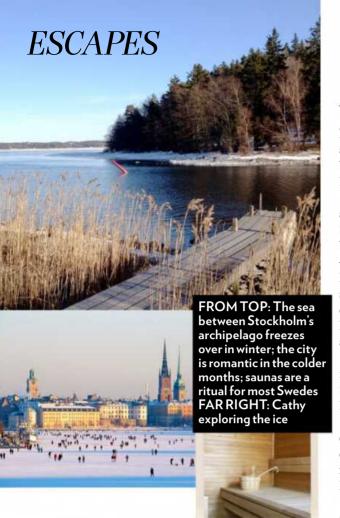
TANITA MONTGOMERY

TRIP NOTES

Seven nights at Haus Alpina, sleeping 10, from £20,000, including staff for six days, champagne reception on arrival, breakfast, tea, canapés and dinner plus daily housekeeping and train station transfers; haus-alpina-klosters.com, info@haus-alpina-klosters.com. SWISS offers up to 86 weekly flights from London, Birmingham and Manchester to Zurich, from £65 one way; swiss. com, 0845 601 0956. Swiss rail tickets from Zurich Airport to Klosters cost £70 return: sbb.ch







ICY PLEASURES

Unleash your inner Scandi in Stockholm, strip off and plunge in

Naked saunas, skinny-dipping in freezing lakes, skating on sea ice – just a few of the things Swedes are good at. Brits? Not so much. But I'm in beautiful Stockholm in midwinter, where snow is thick and candles are lit all over the city, and it feels like the perfect time for an adventure.

I'm testing my nerves at Hellesgården (hellasgarden.se/en), an outdoor activity centre just 15 minutes from the city. Saunas are a ritual for most Swedes and as one woman tells me, as we sit in the searing heat, it can become an addiction. She then drops her towel and pads off – naked – to the frozen lake, leaving me – in my swimsuit – to follow. Before I can think I clamber into the iciness. It hits you after a few seconds,

such coldness it's hard to breathe. I get out pretty quick, my skin feeling like I've rolled in snow. But I also feel exhilarated – adrenalin buzzing and so energised I want to do it again (I don't).

The next day's challenge is skating, with an ice guide, over the sea ice that runs between Stockholm's many islands. We stop for a packed lunch, make a fire and cook sausages.

Winter in Stockholm is rich with outdoor experiences, but there's great shopping and dining, too. People are hearty, good-natured and, returning home, there are plenty of Scandi traits I want to adopt. As my friend in the sauna said, 'Do you feel brave now?' I really did, and that's something I'll happily hang on to. *CATHY LEVY*

TRIP NOTES

Hotel Skeppsholmen, from £110 per night, based on two sharing, including breakfast; hotelskeppsholmen.se. Ice guide tour, from £110 per person, including equipment, lunch and transport. British Airways flies to Stockholm from Heathrow, from £93 one way; ba.com

HOTEL HOTSPOT

After a boutique makeover, this French check-in is a new ski favourite

Forget mince pies and mulled wine; for me there's no better way to get into the festive spirit than with a ski holiday. So, from the moment my horse-drawn sleigh pulled up at the pine cone-shaped Hôtel des Dromonts in the heart of Avoriaz, I knew I was in for a treat. Once the oldest and most tired-looking hotel in town, the Dromonts recently underwent a dramatic makeover and now boasts the kind of luxe décor that has more in common with a stylish

boutique hotel in Paris than the chintz curtains and orange pine you'd expect to find in an Alpine retreat.

Each of the hotel's 34 rooms has a huge bed with silky sheets plus its own sleek bathroom with a properly powerful shower and hairdryer (as a beauty editor, this is important). The food's not too shabby, either. Forget soggy frites, the hotel's two restaurants serve sophisticated bistrostyle fare: the steak au poivre with truffle fries is a must-try.

Ski-wise, the hotel couldn't be better placed. Avoriaz's main chair lift is just a two-minute schuss down a gentle slope and, once you're on the mountain, you're at the gateway to the enormous Portes du Soleil ski area, which has over 400 miles of perfectly manicured pistes and snow parks. You can actually buy a lift pass that covers the entire

region, so it's possible to never do the same run twice. After a hard day on the slopes, I loved heading back to the Dromonts for a knot-melting massage in the Pure Altitude spa, then curling up with a frothy chocolat chaud. But the best bit? At less than £150 a night, the Dromonts is a stylish ski hotel that's affordable, too. Merry Christmas to me. KIM PARKER



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elegant décor

Get ready TO SHINE

Nothing finishes your party look better than salon-perfect nails – and now that's easier than ever with the new REVLON® Shine Addict Nail Buffer

ack in 1932, the very first red nail polish (a bold shade called 'Cherries in the Snow' – still a bestseller) was launched and kick-started the global trend for a gorgeously glossy, shiny manicure as the ideal accessory for any outfit.

Fast-forward to today and experts have come up with a manicure tool that delivers super-shiny, salon-perfect nails in seconds - the REVLON® Shine Addict Nail Buffer.

Just switch it on and hold the buffer's green roller over each nail for two seconds to smooth out ridges

'The Revlon Shine Addict Nail Buffer delivers super-shiny, salon-perfect nails in seconds'

and leave nails perfectly prepped for a base coat or nail colour. It's gentle enough to use every two weeks for truly pro-level results. Then for days when you want to go bare but still have a healthy shine, follow with the buffer's white roller for a naturally bright, glossy finish to your nails. You can even top it up on the go, because the buffer's compact design means it fits in your bag. It's like having your own salon pro in the palm of your hand.

TOP TIP

Who doesn't love having fabulously shiny nails, especially during party season? Stash Revlon Shine Addict Nail Buffers in your desk drawer and your nails will always be party ready, even if you've left your make-up bag at home. Plus, it makes the perfect Christmas gift for any beauty lover (and a treat for you of course).





Voltarol 12 Hour Gel: for all-day pain relief

If you want to seize the day, reach for a tube of Voltarol 12 Hour Gel. Unlike tablets, the gel concentrates relief where you want it: deep in the joints, right at the source of pain. Just ask your pharmacist.

Voltarol® 12 Hour Emulgel P 2.32% Gel contains diclofenac diethylammonium. Age: 14+. Always read the label. CHGBI/CHVOLT/0010/15











hat do you feel about Christmas? Dread? Excitement? A mixture of the two? It's no secret there are a lot of feelings, obligations and expectations tied up in Christmas that can stop you enjoying it - or even liking it.

What's common, I've noticed, is to feel torn between pleasing our partner, our children, our parents – and, with all that going on, we forget to please ourselves. Suze, a writer from Dorset, is a perfect example: 'One year, trying to make it less stressful for everyone, I said, "Don't bother with a present for me." And they

didn't. And I found out I really did mind.' Or sometimes, we might think we're pleasing other people but they think we're only doing whatever it might be for ourselves.

Perhaps it doesn't have to be this way? If you can get a bird'seye view of the origins of how you feel about Christmas, it may be possible to make it feel less charged and more enjoyable.

WHAT DOES YOUR **CHRISTMAS LOOK LIKE?**

Let's start with this: what are you like when 'doing' Christmas? How do you feel? How do you behave? Some people think that they duck out of Christmas, like Joanie, a PA from Manchester. She told me, 'Oh we don't do Christmas – we hang around in our PJs all day, watch old films and mostly consume smoked salmon and champagne. It's the best.' On further enquiry, I find out they've done this every year for the past decade. This is not 'not doing Christmas'. This is part of their Christmas ritual.

In fact, whatever you usually do at this time of year, be it Baileys or board games, is part of your ritual. The ritual is made up of small acts, so one family might have a glorious annual tree-choosing outing, another might make a party out of making the pudding. These all lead up to some sort of climax: for some it's the present opening, for others it's the meal and for many it's when it's all over and we can relax for a few days before returning to work.

But what is the point of the Christmas ritual? Rituals are a part of being human; there isn't a society on earth that doesn't have them. The same thing happening at

the same time seems to make time stand still, a sort of groundhog day, giving us the comforting illusion that nothing ever ends. A ritual is a familiar pattern that contributes to one's sense of safety in the world. And losing such a thing can be like losing a person, you can feel a sense of grief and loss. If your rituals don't feel right, you can feel that something is missing.

DO YOU HAVE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST?

For me, what makes Christmas tricky is the mixture between Christmas Past and Christmas Present. I think my parents must have gone all out to make Christmas as wonderful as possible. In the build-up part of the ritual there was the advent calendar, choosing the tree and a new, precious glass bauble for each child to add to the

family has dispersed; the people who made it happen have died. I'm a different person and I can't pretend to be the person I was, even for a few days. I know how to have a good time, but there is a particular pressure I feel to have the sort of good time I had then, even though I enjoy a smaller, cosy Christmas with just my immediate family. I wonder if the uneasiness is about letting down my ancestors?

feeling insecure at Christmas. Like Charlotte, a graphic designer from that sums up how good or otherwise for the whole of my life. This is why I care about, has a good time. If

I don't spend it with my parents, am I abandoning my parents? But my husband has parents, too!'

'All the "SHOULDS"

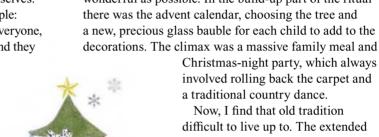
and "OUGHTS" we may

create about Christmas

are something to do with

RE-CREATING a past we

may have IDEALISED'



Some of us have other ways of Brighton, who says, 'The pressure for me is that I see Christmas as a moment my life is. If I don't catch myself doing it, I make Christmas Day stand I feel so obligated that I, and everyone

ARE YOU BEING GUIDED BY 'SHOULDS'?

I think all the 'shoulds' and 'oughts' we may create for ourselves about Christmas are something to do with re-creating a past we may have idealised.

It's as though there is a layer of obligation over the whole thing. I consult my friend Hareem, an IT specialist, who moved here from Pakistan with no family Christmas tradition: 'I enjoy the days off work and parties with colleagues. But I notice that people have very fixed ideas



about what they should be doing and sometimes there is a lot of variation even within the same family. I see tensions build up. It must make for interesting times!'

He's right: everyone has their own layers of expectations, emotions and memories together with possible clashes as to what Christmas should be about. Suze from Dorset says, 'The worst Christmas was when we didn't invite Uncle Marcus, who always gets drunk. And he came anyway and the tension went through the roof. The kids somehow felt it and started playing up. I think we were all relieved when that was over.'

And Christmas can feel so loaded. 'Driving up and down the country, trying to fit everyone in, gets us down,' says Sarah from Wakefield. 'I might cut myself some slack this Christmas and spread visits out over the year instead. It will be disappointing some people though... and it seems important to see the people we always do at this time of year. I'm not sure the guilt will be worth it!'

ARE YOU DOING THE RIGHT THING?

Talking to people about what they do at Christmas, I began to notice a pattern, which was that some people got very emphatic that the way they spend Christmas would be best for everyone – theirs was the ritual that shouldn't be deviated from. Take Pip, a dentist in Warrington. 'Oh, you've got to go for it. Making all the decorations and food is a big part of it and the day itself is an orgy of presents, food and board games. I do think it's important for kids.' I asked Pip, 'But what if there weren't any kids in your family?' and she said, 'Then the youngest family members must be the kids.' 'Even if they are 36?' 'Yes!' said Pip emphatically.

IS IT TIME TO FIND A NEW RITUAL?

Even if you wanted to forget Christmas you can't because no street goes undecorated. It would require staying indoors with the curtains closed for three months! A friend, let's call her Jane, told me she does ignore Christmas. 'It may have something to do with the fact I was always given £10 every year. Which wasn't too bad when I was six. When I was 21, it grated a bit.' But this is told to me with a mixture of anger and sadness, not neutrality.

Is it really possible not to notice that others are having jollier rituals than you are? I suspect that's got to hurt. Trying to ignore the festive season may be an attempt not to feel the hurt of old, but pain may be felt anyway. And

Your strategy for a happier Christmas

Analyse your Christmas by going back to the origins of how you feel about it, and you'll be able to work out ways to make it more fun

Write down your Christmas ritual (or non-ritual, if you're still in denial that you have a ritual!). Then, still writing, answer these questions:

- 1) What do you love about your ritual?
- 2) What do you dislike about it?
- 3) What are the 'oughts' and 'shoulds' you have about Christmas?
- **4)** What feelings do you have about the Christmases of your childhood?
- 5) How do the Christmases of your childhood affect how you feel about Christmas today?
- 6) How do those feelings affect how you plan your Christmas today?
- 7) What do you think the most important thing is for the people closest to you?
- 8) What are your anxieties about Christmas? Where do they come from? Are they yours or did you inherit them?
- 9) What was your worst Christmas?
- 10) What was your best Christmas? Now share your answers with a friend or someone in your family and listen to their answers to these questions. Hopefully, this'll help you on your way to a better, happier Christmas.



the ritual of pretending Christmas doesn't happen is still a ritual so, if that's you, it may be time to invent a new ritual.

One that I'm fond of is including someone who otherwise wouldn't have a Christmas. I have to confess, this is not really for their sake. And I'm not the only person who thinks like this. 'As a Jew,' says my friend Jo, 'I find myself in great demand at this time of year. I think people invite me to Christmas lunch to make their family behave!'

This exercise (above) may help you decide what that should be and it may help all of us know our Christmas selves a bit better. 'I expect I'm like a lot of people,' says Stevie from Brighton. 'I dread and hate Christmas until December 21st, then I get swept up in it and begin panic-buying presents and then I notice I'm really enjoying it.' Personally, I feel a mild envy for people for whom Christmas just

'happens' while other people (like me!) are making it happen. I think, this year, I may try to inject a bit more Stevie into my own ritual.

For more advice on families from Philippa Perry, go to REDONLINE.CO.UK

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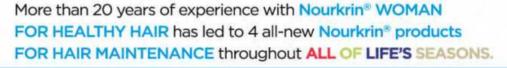
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In the midst of hangover season, Alice Pantony finds a way to give cocktails a healthy twist. And no, she's not ditching the alcohol

t's 11.30pm on a Saturday and I'm on my second cocktail. I'm feeling slightly tipsy but also a bit smug; I'm drinking a raw-food cocktail made from organic gin, sweet cold-pressed pineapple, hydrating cucumber water, raw honey and matcha green tea powder.

I know what you're thinking: you've heard enough about kale, chia and quinoa in food, you don't need your booze to go clean, too. Especially not at this time of year. But clean drinking is the fastest-growing drink trend – and it's the future, according to raw-food evangelist Tanya Maher, who set up what she says is Europe's first superfood cocktail bar at her eponymous London restaurant.

'Unless we've actively given up alcohol, we'll always have a tipple, right?' says Maher, an unfeasibly energetic blonde. While it's refreshing to find a health guru who's happy to condone drinking, she does have a qualifier: 'It's about finding balance. Pairing spirits with vegetables, fruits, herbs; all these are rich in nutrients and vitamins, which help balance out the negative impact of alcohol on our immune systems, making us feel bad the next day.'

Making the cocktail with less alcohol will help – that much is obvious – but it's so much easier to do if the mixer is a delicious juice, not a boring tonic. 'Include plenty of mixers and opt for hydrating juices, such as cucumber and aloe,' says nutritionist Rob Hobson, co-author of The Detox Kitchen Bible. Hobson also suggests adding

production while beetroot encourages liver cleansing.'

As well as using natural mixers, the key to clean cocktails is their lack of refined sugar. 'Sugar spikes our blood sugar, and the comedown can add to a headache,' says Lottie Muir, a mixologist who made her name using seasonal, botanical ingredients. 'If you're using packet sugar, opt for a raw, unrefined brown sugar or coconut palm sugar, both lower in the glycemic index.'

No refined sugar for Maher, either, who uses fruits for sweetness, as well as honey (see her sangria

'The key

to CLEAN

cocktails is

their LACK

of refined

SUGAR'

and margarita recipes over the page). At home, if you haven't got a juicer or blender, you can get the same result by mixing a cold-pressed juice with alcohol.

'Of course, you have to be realistic,' Maher says, with a hint of exasperation that makes me wonder how many times she's had to explain this. 'You can't neck a whole bottle of vodka and say, "Because I'm drinking

it with cold-pressed juices, I won't get a hangover." Nothing will make over-drinking good for you.

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating... or drinking, in this case. And sure enough, at 9am on the Sunday after my two cocktails, I feel fresh, awake and with no sign of a headache. I could get used to this. >>

SELF

The recommended daily limit for women is up to two to three units of alcohol (one unit is 25ml of spirits), so you could have one of the cocktails below, or just reduce the alcohol.

WINTER SANGRIA

SERVES: 6 **UNITS OF ALCOHOL:** 1-2 (per serving)

- 80q coconut palm sugar
- 4 tbsp mixed spice
- 2 tbsp ginger powder
- 2 tbsp cinnamon powder
- 750ml red wine (a medium-bodied wine such as rioja, Merlot or Malbec)
- 250ml orange juice
- 250ml sparkling water
- Ice cubes
- Fruit slices (apple, orange, pear, grapes, lemon and lime)
- 1 Dissolve the coconut palm sugar in 240ml of hot water and stir in all the spices. Leave to cool.
- 2 Pour the syrup through a sieve to extract the liquid. Put the liquid in a jug, along with the wine and orange juice. Cover and leave in the fridge to infuse for two to 15 hours (the longer, the better).
- **3** To serve, top up with sparkling water and pour over ice and fruit.

FESTIVE MANGO MARGARITA

SERVES: 1 (infusion makes for 7) UNITS OF ALCOHOL: 3

- 1/4 ripe mango, chopped, plus extra, cut into small cubes, to garnish
- Ice cubes
- 80ml orange juice (freshly squeezed)
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tbsp agave nectar
- 1 tbsp baobab powder (try revital.co.uk)

For the tequila infusion:

- 6 inch ginger root, skin on, thinly sliced on a mandolin
- 500ml tequila/mescal

1 Make the tequila infusion first by stirring the slices of ginger root with the tequila or mescal. Pour into a sealable glass jar and place the lid on tightly. Leave to infuse at room temperature for three to five days, then strain the liquid and return to the jar to keep.

- **2** Muddle the chopped mango and a handful of ice cubes in a shaker. Add 70ml of the infused teguila/mescal and all the remaining ingredients except the mango garnish, and shake hard.
- **3** Strain into a glass over ice and garnish with mango cubes. By Tanya Maher; The Uncook Book: The Essential Guide To A Raw Food Lifestyle (Hay House, £16.99)



GUNPOWDER GIMLET (above)

SERVES: 1 UNITS OF ALCOHOL: 2

- 25ml lime juice
- 15ml agave syrup

For the green tea and cardamom gin:

- 1 green tea bag
- 6-8 green cardamom pods
- 70cl bottle good-quality gin

1 To make the infused gin, add the green tea bag and green cardamom pods to the gin, and leave for 24 hours. **2** Pour 50ml of the infusion into a cocktail shaker over ice with

the rest of the ingredients, strain and pour into a coupe. By Tredwell's; tredwells.com



WOODLAND MARTINI (above)

SERVES: 6 **UNITS OF ALCOHOL:** 3 (per serving)

- 6 tbsp honey
- A few pinches of fir, spruce or pine needles
- 360ml good-quality vodka
- 90ml good-quality dry vermouth
- 60ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Fir tip, to garnish (from the tree; optional)

1 Make a honey fir syrup by mixing the honey with 65ml of water, then add the fir, spruce or pine needles. Allow to boil for five minutes, then take off the heat. Let the mixture cool, then strain.

2 Pour all the ingredients into a cocktail shaker and fill it two thirds of the way up with ice. Cover and shake hard for 20 seconds.

3 Strain the contents of the shaker into the glass. Garnish with a fir tip. By Lottie Muir: Wild Cocktails From The Midnight Apothecary (CICO Books, £16.99) 2

For more clean cocktail recipes, go to REDONLINE.CO.UK



Add some FIZZ

Put some sparkle into your party this Christmas with a glass of elegant bubbles from Freixenet



Party season is here bringing mouthwatering canapés, delicious Christmas dinners and, most important of all for special celebrations, a drop of sparkling wine.

But which will give your party the most sparkle? For those in the know, Freixenet is the perfect choice. A Spanish sparkling wine from the Penedès region of Catalonia, home of Spanish Cava. Freixenet is one of the highest quality wines in its classification (D.O. Cava produced using the traditional

'Sparkling wine from the Penedes region of Catalonia, home of Spanish Cava'

method). Cordon Negro, a crisp and refreshing party wine with delicate bubbles, available in a sleek matt black bottle, and Cordon Rosado, fresh and fruity aromas and full of elegant sparkle, possibly the most stylish sparkling wine pair on the market.

Cordon Negro is available in magnum size for those extra special celebrations or 20cl – perfect when you're wrapping presents – it's the drink for any occasion. So wherever you are, Be Freixenet this Christmas!

Cordon Negro and Cordon Rosado 75cl, both £9.99. For more information see freixenet. co.uk and #befreixenet @FreixenetUK



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Mygrudge AMNESTY

It's not always easy to move on from the past, but an ancient technique might just hold the key. Self-confessed grudgeholder Abigail Butcher puts it to the test, and discovers the power of learning to let go

Illustration YIPPIEHEY

ast Sunday morning, I logged on to Facebook...
and began to seethe at pictures of a friend partying
the previous night. A few weeks before, she'd
RSVP'd to decline my 40th birthday party, saying
the three-hour drive was too far. Yet there she
was, living it up with other mates who lived at least the
same distance from her. It felt like a kick in the teeth.

Even when she first told me she couldn't make it, and I pretended to shrug it off, deep down I was immeasurably hurt. I took it extremely personally and, for that reason, I know it has damaged our friendship, possibly irreparably.

The big letdown

Allowing irritations, however trivial, to spiral out of control has been the story of my life. When life is fine, such things don't seem to matter, but when it's not, I dwell on the fact I've been let down, digging up memories that help me blow everything out of proportion. The list of friends I am cross with, but also miss in my life, is lengthy. Equally, I think part of the reason I haven't yet settled down is my inability to forgive and forget.

Reaching 40, I decided it was time to do something about it. So when, during a networking event earlier this year, I met forgiveness coach Dr Jane Lewis, a fiftysomething, red-haired, jolly woman who emanated tranquillity, confidence and self-belief, I booked a session.

Dr Lewis is qualified in psychology, coaching, neurolinguistic programming and hypnotherapy but has also done a PhD thesis specialising in Huna – the ancient spiritual teachings of Hawaii. She explained that while she does use some Western techniques, she mainly bases her work on an ancient Huna technique called Ho'oponopono, which means to 'make right' and be at peace with yourself. 'The Hawaiian system believes that everything should be forgiven,' she explains. 'Whether or not you continue to have a relationship is up to you.'

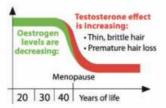
She told me forgiveness is not just of others but, in fact, mainly of ourselves. 'When you forgive others, the person you're really forgiving is you, for allowing yourself to get into the difficult situation in the first place.' Having had various bouts of talking therapy over the years, there was something about using an ancient, spiritual technique to change a behaviour pattern that really appealed to me.

Forgiveness is a hot topic in self-help right now, where it's taken over from gratitude as a source of huge mental-health benefits. The research is fascinating: when you harbour a grudge, it releases the same chemicals as a stress response – adrenalin, cortisol and noradrenalin. Dr Frederic Luskin, director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Projects, has done studies in Northern Ireland with people who lost family members in the Troubles. He found those taught to forgive were not only less angry and more compassionate, but more optimistic, self-confident, »

Over one third of women experience hair loss after menopause



This graph shows how when a woman approaches the menopause, her oestrogen levels decline, and the negative effect of her testosterone rises. This hormonal fluctuation can lead to hair thinning or hair loss. For those women affected, the hair loss can be dramatic.



Plantur 39 shampoo is formulated with a Phyto-Caffeine ingredient that, if used regularly may help reduce the affect of these hormones on the hair roots. Which could help reduce hair thinning or hair loss during and after the menopause. and carried less stress. 'Over time, noradrenalin and cortisol lead you to feel helpless and like a victim. When you forgive, you wipe all of that clean,' says Dr Luskin. And a recent study by Erasmus University in Rotterdam found ruminating on things decreases the brain power we have available for physical tasks like walking up a hill. The study concludes: 'Forgiveness can lighten this burden.'

When I sit down on Dr Lewis' sofa in her north London home for my forgiveness coaching, I'm more than ready to lighten mine. We spend the first half hour talking through my cycle: how I spend time building up my resilience and happiness with counselling and by taking care of myself, to have it eroded by circumstance and stress, ending in bouts

of debilitating depression, when I hate the world and think the world hates me.

Dr Lewis suggests I remember that people are trying to do the best they can and are busy with their own lives. 'Think of people like swans – you don't see how hard they are frantically paddling to stay afloat.' It makes me feel foolish: I know this, of course I do.

As I was heading to our meeting, I tell her, I thought about the people I wanted to forgive. As well as the friend who couldn't make my 40th, there was the boy at school who filled my coat pockets with tampons to embarrass me and my two closest girlfriends who went on holiday without me (when we were 16!). More recently, I've been angry with the friend who didn't offer to cook for me when I was living through building work with no

kitchen or bathroom, and the one who got a new boyfriend and suddenly stopped making any effort to see me.

Let it go, let it go

I admit to Dr Lewis that I go over and over these scenarios, and I feel rejected time and time again. 'The belief that you're not good enough is very common,' explains Dr Lewis, adding, 'We're very good at re-creating situations to reinforce this belief. Letting go of guilt about the way we did or did not behave is self-forgiveness.' Her technique, she says, can be used like a regular grudge declutterer.

She then asks me to close my eyes. 'Picture the person you want to forgive, standing on a stage below you. Imagine a healing white light streaming down through the crown of your head, filling your whole body. Allow the light to heal you completely – flowing out through your heart, coating your entire body, spilling over on to the stage so the person in front of you is healed, too.'

I think of another scenario: a girlfriend with whom I had a holiday spat two years ago. We were good mates before we went to the Maldives but haven't spoken much since. 'Say, "I forgive you; please forgive me," and once you have forgiven each other, imagine a laser cutting the light, the cords of connection, then watch them leave the stage.'

Aha, I've heard this technique before. At the risk of sounding like someone on the eternal quest for self-help, it was during a hypnosis session I once had at a spa, about a break-up. As I imagined cutting the ties with my ex, I burst into tears. So I know this is a powerful process, but I hadn't thought I could use it myself.

'Not forgiving is like a tether,' says Dr Lewis, who teaches the technique via Skype, as well as in face-toface meetings that work on clearing emotions and cementing the process in a slower way. Forgiveness, she

explains, doesn't mean you need to be friends; it can mean simply cutting the tether, and finally being at peace.

Having had such a strong reaction to this technique before, I was expecting big things, but there was no epiphany on that sofa in Finsbury Park. It wasn't until later, when I started to practise it at home, that I noticed something.

Dr Lewis had recommended I start practising with the less important scenarios. So I began with my puppy, Thala, when she ate my sunglasses one morning, and knocked my iPhone into the sea on a walk on the beach an hour later. Intense anger quickly dissipated when I realised I didn't need to forgive the dog, but myself, for allowing her to be able to reach these things. It was a small but important step.

People often say the only thing you can control is your reaction, and using Ho'oponopono reinforced that. Over the next week I imagined different scenarios from each day, but also from my past. By seeing clearly the self-centred way I would normally interpret people's behaviour, I started to be able to let go.

Slowly, I felt a shift in my tolerance. I invited the friend who'd been wrapped up in her new love round for supper. Over wine she explained how, at 42, she'd decided to focus on her relationship, the happiest she's ever had. And who can blame her for putting herself first?

I know I still have a long way to go, but I feel now I have an armoury to work with. 'The forgiveness process is like an onion, you have to peel away the layers,' says Dr Lewis. Several weeks on, I'm using the visualisation technique as and when I need it.

My 40th birthday arrived and when some friends – inevitably, I know – cancelled on the day, I was irritated. But, this time, it only took a short time for the bubble of anger to burst. And I spent the night having a lot

of fun with the people who did make the effort, the ones who I know are important to me.

For more on the forgiveness technique, go to REDONLINE.CO.UK

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Top up your immune system with these vitality boosters

WELLBEING

18 HEALTH HACKS

Feeling cold-y, sugar-loaded or just plain tired? Nicola Down asks the experts what to do and take to stay well

Photographs LOUISA PARRY

TIRED?

BEE POLLEN + VEG JUICE + YOGA

Stress, alcohol, sugar and not eating properly leave you low in vitamin B, essential for energy. Take a B-complex supplement, or top up your levels with bee pollen, beloved by Victoria Beckham. 'As well as being extraordinarily high in B vitamins, it's also rich in protein as well as vitamins A, C, D and E, making it nature's energising multivitamin,' says Shabir Daya, in-house pharmacist for Victoria Health.

One new study found that people who had two or more servings of salad greens daily had the mental energy of people 11 years younger, and the authors theorised it could be down to the vitamin K in greens. Forget shop-bought green juices, which are often fruit smoothies with a bit of green veg. 'Blend your salad rather than juicing so you eat the whole vegetable – fibre and all,' says trainer Steve Mellor of Freedom2Train. Dark greens are also a veggie source of vitality-boosting iron, something many of us lack. Add a single small portion of fruit and/or some ginger to make it more palatable.

Finally, the right yoga pose is as reviving as a flat white. 'The bridge or cobra pose is instantly energising because it encourages you to inhale, stimulating the nervous system and oxygenating the blood,' says teacher Leila Sadeghee from London's Triyoga. Not the right time or place (or skirt) to bend? Stand tall and lift your chest. 'When you're not slumping, you breathe in a more energising way,' she says.

WHAT TO BUY: Comvita Bee Pollen Granules (£26.75, victoria health com): Nutri Pullet (£70.00, lakeland com):

WHAT TO BUY: Comvita Bee Pollen Granules (£26.75, victoriahealth.com); NutriBullet (£79.99, lakeland.co.uk); Yogamatters yoga mat (from £17, yogamatters.com)



CRAVING SUGAR?

PROTEIN + SPINACH + CHROMIUM + CINNAMON

From the office chocolate tin to M&S pudding ads, you'd think Christmas was the festival of sugar. Don't want to overdo it? Start the day with a protein-rich breakfast. One study showed this reduced the amount of sugar and snacks eaten later. Protein prompts you to release the feel-good brain chemical dopamine, which has a direct effect on giving in to impulses – or not. 'Don't start the day with something sweet as it'll set you up for wanting more sugar,' says Mellor. He suggests protein-powder pancakes, served with Greek yoghurt and berries. Or eggs Benedict with spinach – in a study, people who ate spinach for breakfast had reduced sweet cravings later, maybe due to appetite-suppressing chemicals in greens called thylakoids.

If you get to 3pm and want to steal sweets from children, try a chromium supplement in the morning. Chromium helps regulate the production of insulin, the hormone in charge of blood-sugar levels. Pharma Nord Bio-Gluco Control contains chromium yeast plus maqui berry extract, which slows the absorption of sugar and starches.

Sugar in coffee is, of course, a bad idea. Instead, sprinkle on cinnamon. 'Cinnamon has been studied for >>

its effects on stabilising blood sugar,' says Daya. It's not proven, but it may help to blunt the rise in blood sugar after carbs, and so stop the slump that brings on cravings. WHAT TO BUY: Pharma Nord Bio-Gluco Control (£18.95, pharmanord.co.uk); GlucoActive Cinnamon Extract (£24, victoriahealth.com); Neat Nutrition Lean Protein Powder (£34, neat-nutrition.com)

ALCOHOL

SALTS + GINGER + BANANAS + NAC

You know the rule about alternating glasses of water with wine. But a new study suggests this isn't a symptom cureall. 'Dehydration was thought to be the main cause of hangover symptoms, but it's now understood that although it's a crucial element, alcohol withdrawal, and the chemicals formed when our body breaks down the alcohol, also contribute,' says GP, Dr Roger Henderson. 'Women have lower levels of an 'Your GUT is antioxidant called glutathione, which, along an essential with lower body weight, is one reason part of your

The supplement NAC cranks up your levels of glutathione. Team with a supplement of nopal, a prickly pear with a similar action to milk thistle. One clinical study suggested it could halve severe hangover symptoms.

women may suffer from worse hangovers.'

But hydration is still needed. 'The key is to get salts and sugar into your water, so your intestines pull the fluid into your body, says nutrition scientist Dr Stacy Sims. 'Ensuring you get potassium (hello, banana) will also help you regain your body's fluid balance.' Try a rehydration powder, such as Dioralyte, which replenishes salts and fluids, followed by a stomach-settling fresh ginger in hot water. WHAT TO BUY: Viridian 100% Organic Nopal Capsules (£20.90, viridian-nutrition.com); Solgar NAC (£22.99, revital.co.uk)

BUGS ABOUT?

HAND WASH + SLEEP + SOCKS + PELARGONIUM

Washing your hands regularly and not touching your eyes, nose or mouth is the only proven way to swerve a cold says Professor Ron Eccles, director of the Common Cold Centre at Cardiff University. But you can up your resistance, he says, by 'dealing with the things that lower your immunity'. The latest: sleep is non-negotiable. A University of California study found those who only clocked up six hours a night were four times more likely to catch a cold than those who hit seven. 'And there's mounting evidence that stress increases the release of corticosteroid hormones which are known to decrease resistance to infection, so taking time to de-stress really can help,' says Professor Eccles.

Even what you wear around your neck and on your feet matters. 'A new theory says that because our noses are colder in winter, this makes it easier for the virus to replicate. So wearing a scarf high on your face could be useful,' says Professor Eccles. 'Another recent study found that getting cold feet increases the likelihood of cold and flu symptoms in people exposed to the virus.' Buy those cashmere socks: it's science.

What if you're coming down with a cold? Studies suggest the herb pelargonium is so effective that research is currently under way at the Cardiff Common Cold Centre.

Your gut is an essential part of your immune system, too, says naturopathic nutritionist Rosemary Ferguson. 'Being able to fight off bugs is dependent on having good bacteria in your gut fighting your corner,' she says. 'So up your intake of prebiotic foods such as leeks, onions,

garlic, artichokes, asparagus, beans and legumes and team with a good probiotic supplement.'

> WHAT TO BUY: Schwabe Pharma Kaloba Pelargonium Cough & Cold Relief Tablets (£9.18, schwabepharma.co.uk); Bimuno Immunaid (£9.99, bimuno.com)

BAD SLEEP?

IMMUNE

system²

DARK + CHERRY + LAVENDER

This is a time of year when you might start waking early if you go to work and come home in the dark. Try and get some first light – which can be as late as 8am in December. Follow Gwyneth Paltrow's

lead and have an 'electronic sundown', turning off all screens by 10pm. 'Strong artificial light suppresses the release of sleep-promoting hormone melatonin and can even reset your sleep-wake cycle to "wake",' says physiotherapist Sammy Margo. Taking a cherry extract, containing naturally occurring melatonin, before bed may help; one study suggested it can add an extra hour a night.

But if it's tension that's stealing your slumber – the clue is that you get a 'second wind' at 11pm – deal with that head on. Try a passionflower supplement, taken at night with a small, strong cup of high-quality chamomile tea. Or Ferguson suggests magnesium powder stirred into water. 'It aids muscle relaxation, making it helpful before bed,' she says. 'Or have a bath with Epsom Salts, made of magnesium sulphate, for instant calm.'

Before bed, spritz Neom's Perfect Night's Sleep Pillow Mist, with English lavender, sweet basil and jasmine. Almost nine out of 10 testers said it helped their sleep. WHAT TO BUY: Ultra Muscleze (£32.99, nutricentre. com); Schwabe Pharma RelaxHerb (£9.49, revital.co.uk);

Pukka Three Chamomile Tea (£2.39, pukkaherbs.com); Cherry Active (£17.99, revital.co.uk); Neom Perfect Night's Sleep Pillow Mist (£20, neomorganics.com)

For bedtime yoga moves and breakfast recipes, go to REDONLINE.CO.UK



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THE NO-TIME FIT FIX



Being short on time doesn't mean you have to go short on exercise, says Laura Vanderkam

'Il pick back up in January.' That's the thought many of us have about trying to stay in shape in December. It's dark, cold and our time is filled with cake and cocktails. I understand. I have four kids under the age of nine. But it turns out many busy women *do* make time to exercise, as I discovered when I collected 1,001 days of 'time diaries' from professional women with

If they can do it, so can the rest of us – even during the December crunch. Here are their best strategies.

families for my book, I Know How She Does It.

GO FUNCTIONAL

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the women who exercised most had built it into their daily lives. An engineering professor biked to and from work most days. A lawyer walked to the train station – at 15 minutes each way, that was 30 minutes of daily walking right there. Even if biking or public transport isn't an option, park further away. I try to walk briskly up escalators. Over time, the steps add up.

INCORPORATE THE KIDS

If you've got little ones, you don't want to stop by the gym for hours in the evening. But if they're little enough, you might be able to do what one woman did: she loaded her toddler son in a running pushchair when she got home from work. She was able to fit in five runs during the week she recorded for me. At the weekend, go a mile to the playground, let your kid run around, then jog a mile back. That's a great outing for everyone.

One partner in a communications firm woke up at 5am every morning to meet friends at a CrossFit gym. She was home by the time her family woke up. A doctor started her day with home yoga. We tend to have the most willpower in the morning. It's practical,

too – you only have to shower once.

USE FLEXIBILITY TO MANUFACTURE TIME
If you work from home one day a week, you can

exercise during what would have been your morning commute. One entrepreneur told me on days she didn't need to be on video calls, she'd work in her exercise kit. The minute she had a gap, she was out the door for a 20-minute run. It's not much, but it is better than nothing.

THINK 168 HOURS, NOT 24

One thing I learned from studying women's schedules is that instead of looking for the perfect time to exercise every day, look at all 168 hours in a week. Maybe one morning I wake up early for a run. Another day I squeeze in some time in the afternoon. A third, I run on the treadmill for 30 minutes after the kids go to bed.

DON'T FEAR COMMITMENT

If fitting in a workout seems tough, it seems like joining a sports team would be even tougher. But when things involve commitments to other people, they're easier to do. Despite working 50 hours a week, one

easier to do. Despite working 50 hours a week, one single mother in Canada played in a curling league on Monday nights and at weekends. Could you join a team?

F BE BOLD

In an office, you may think it's impossible to work out during the work day, but are you sure? One IT director started taking a lunch-hour class. Her report: 'Even though I took time away from work, I had much greater mental clarity after I exercised, and was able to accomplish more in less time.' And one-on-one conversations are ripe for turning into walking meetings. Even if you need to bundle up in the cold, you'll return

rosy-cheeked and happier. It Know How She Does It by Laura Vanderkam (Portfolio Penguin, £9.99)

Tell us how you fit your fitness in @RedMagDaily, and for more ideas, see REDONLINE.CO.UK

ASK PHILIPPA

A reader who discovered her relationship was a sham has begun to obsess about every moment of it. Try not to look back, says psychotherapist and *Red's* agony aunt, Philippa Perry

Photograph CAMERON McNEE

Six months ago I met A, who I fell for straight away. I'm 34 and it was the first time this had ever happened to me. My life is pretty good, but I hadn't had a long-term relationship for a few years. I'd been wondering if I would ever find the right person to share my life with.

On our first date, A told me he had been separated for a year, was going through a divorce and that his ex-wife and child lived in London. For six months, we had a lovely time. He travelled a lot, to see his child and for work, but when he was here, for a week or two each month, he spent most nights with me. He told me he didn't want a full-blown relationship because of the divorce but that we could develop organically and that he loved me.

Then, last week, I got a message from his wife telling me that A had asked her to call me. She said they had got back together two months before, so there could be nothing more between us. And that A had been seeing another girl in another city he visits for work, too! I worked out that in one week, he must have

slept with me on the Monday, the other girl on the Tuesday and his wife on the Wednesday.

I've called, texted and emailed A, but he has refused to speak to me. When he did reply, it was to say I was making up that we were ever together. Am I being a psycho in thinking what he did is wrong? How can I ever trust anyone again? And how can I move on from this? Name withheld

Firstly, you are not being a psycho. You are acting in a normal way after you've been conned and had your heart broken. Being deceived makes anyone doubt their sanity, especially being lied to by someone you love.

I've only been able to include an edited version of your original email, which seemed to leave out no detail. You went over every conversation and understanding you had ever had with

this man. From the information you sent me, the following seems clear: 1) You were used and duped. 2) To make himself appear better, he has changed the facts of your affair and what he said – and this is what's making you doubt yourself and your sanity. And 3) In order to hold on to your sanity you are becoming obsessive. Obsession is so consuming it pushes away feelings like anger, self-doubt and sadness.

Not surprisingly, you have worked yourself up about this distressing affair. But going over and over the details will not help. The trick is to switch your mind from past to present. When you catch yourself obsessing about the past, try to let it go by concentrating on what you can notice about your surroundings in the present. You will become calmer by changing your focus from circular thoughts that go nowhere to paying attention to sounds, colours – even how you are breathing.

Although you were conned, it could be you didn't spot he was duplicitous because you have a pattern of seeing what you want to see where men are concerned, instead of what is in front of you. Counselling might help you – not to obsess about his behaviour but to become more curious and informed about your own. I always think that as we only have one life, it is worth investing in therapy so that we can make the best of it.

Just because one man hasn't worked out, that is not a rule for all men. The past need not be the future. You might learn, in time, that perhaps your type of man is, in fact, not your type. Perhaps you should allow in someone who, although you're not very strongly attracted to at first, grows on you. Doing something different means using your head where in the past you may have over-relied on the heart. And lust, I'm afraid, is no accurate indicator of suitability as a potential long-term partner.

I'm sorry you've gone through this heartache, it will mend. All this pain may be something to get through before you know you need to do things differently.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO ASK PHILIPPA?

Philippa would love to give you an answer to your problem, whether it's about life change, work/life balance or work issues, expectations or confidence, goals and ambitions, children or fertility, friends, frenemies, partners or relations. Email her in confidence at therapy@redmagazine.co.uk. You'll find all Philippa's past columns at Redonline.co.uk.

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This month's ESSENTIALS

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This month's ESSENTIALS

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'swingability'.



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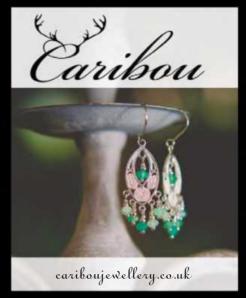
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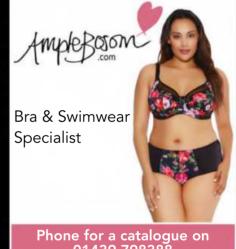
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HOROSCOPES

STARS

Yasmin Boland reveals what's in store for you this month Illustration HARRIET TAYLOR SEED

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23rd-Dec 21st

The new moon in your sign is giving you a chance to get your life in order, and that should be your number-one aim as 2015 ends. Do a personal and professional inventory of the year... then start planning for 2016.

> CAPRICORN Dec 22nd-Jan 19th Ask yourself, 'What am I scared of?' Based on your answer, you will know which part of your life you need to deal with this month. You currently have incendiary stars but that's a good thing. A personal and/or professional issue needs dealing with. Face fear head on and you'll see it off.

> AQUARIUS Jan 20th-Feb 18th December looks very good for you. At work, you'll be flavour of the month so make the most of it, whether that means signing more deals or seeking a pay rise. Socially, whittle your friends list down to the ones who really mean something to you. Also, make a few wishes on December 11th.

PISCES Feb 19th-Mar 20th Don't wait for the new year; get clear about your career resolutions now. The new moon and Saturn are both supercharging your ambitions - use this or lose this. If you hate your job, see a career counsellor. If you love it, you could be about to become a power player. Lovewise, it's still very promising.



ARIES Mar 21st-Apr 19th It's time for you to take on a new attitude to work. The efforts you make now could stand you in amazing stead for years to come. Consider doing something completely different, especially something technological or online. Don't (necessarily) wait for the new year to shake things up.

TAURUS Apr 20th-May 20th There is good news for you in your personal life this month, especially when it comes to sex and romance. If you haven't had enough fun of late, you are getting yet another message from the universe to go out there and enjoy yourself. Financially, it's a wonderful month to start fresh, but this time armed with a plan.

GEMINI May 21st-June 21st The new moon in your love zone is exactly what you need to get back on track when it comes to one very important relationship. If you've been through rough times with your beloved, ex or business partner, use what you have learned going forwards. If sex is an issue, now's a good time to face up to problems. CANCER June 22nd-July 22nd You do not want to end the year on a bad note, right? December brings your chance to be nice and reasonable, even under duress! Breathe through upsets, especially in the first week. Use the power of Jupiter and think positively! Don't underrate positive thinking, either. Work-wise, a new cycle begins.

LEO July 23rd-Aug 23rd December is meant to be a fun month and, as a Leo, you can be the life and soul of any party. So put all that together now and stop worrying about the things that get in the way of you having a good time. Harness the heavens and schedule in some time out. You need to relax and blow off (work) steam.

VIRGO Aug 24th-Sept 22nd The new moon activates lucky Jupiter in Virgo, as well as bringing happier days at home and/or regarding family. Do continue to work hard to get your personal life the way you want it to be. Don't let upsets get you down. Be especially wary of letting money matters get to you. Life is too short.

LIBRA Sept 23rd-Oct 23rd Use this month to start again when it comes to your thinking. Notice when you are thinking negatively and do something (like flicking a rubber band on your wrist) to break the thought pattern. If you can focus on what you want rather than what you don't want, the world will open up to you.

SCORPIO Oct 24th-Nov 22nd So here is where you get all your karmic payback in relationships (personal and professional) and when it comes to cash. Don't worry, because it all looks good! The planet of love and abundance, aka Venus, is in your sign and doing amazing things to your chart. Expect the best and you really could get it. 2





NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

He's got four legs, a lot of allergies and he's not big on small talk, but the singer's rescue Maltese, Mr Wilson, is her best friend

Photographs ALEX EDWARDS

adopted Mr Wilson in a moment of madness, three years ago, when I was living in LA. It really was madness: I wasn't planning on staying in LA, so I don't know what possessed me to start investigating adopting a dog. I'd owned a dog for 12 years previously, so I knew it was a big commitment.

I met Mr Wilson when he was about seven months old, through a charity called Wags and Walks. One of their foster carers, Leslie, matched me with three dogs and arranged a date with each. I ended up only meeting two; Mr Wilson was the second and we fell in love. His name comes from the yet who visited him when

he was rescued, Ms Wilson, but I thought it suited him so I kept it – I think it sounds very distinguished. He also reminds me of Falkor from *The NeverEnding Story*.

Our biggest bonding experience was when we flew back to London together, and settled here. We found out he is allergic to pretty much everything – beef, chicken, fish, mugwort – but we always try to work around that. He comes with me almost everywhere when I'm in town, but I've got some special people who look after him when I'm travelling – it wouldn't be fun for him without other dogs. But he's just awesome. He's my best mate. wagsandwalks.org

Interview Lucia Ferigutti. Hair Choccy at One Represents. Make-up Linda Johansson at One Represents. Styling Lauren T Franks. Natalie wears: T-shirt, Cos. Trousers, 3.1 Phillip Lim at Harvey Nichols. Necklace, Diane Kordas





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